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AN EXPERIMENT IN ALIEN LABOR

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AN EXPERIMENT IN ALIEN LABOR

BY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS
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PREFACE

This study in immigration was undertaken while the writer was a student in the Universities of Bonn and Berlin, and was presented as a Doctor's thesis. The study grew out of his interest in the Asiatic problem as seen in this country, and the difficulties met in its solution here. In addition to the writer's interest in the coolie was his interest in the Negro in the South, a race with which he had an intimate acquaintance. In addition to the interest in both these problems as presented in this country, the experiment with the coolies in South Africa is rich in new material for study and information.

Those introducing the Chinese into the Transvaal believed that they had an inexhaustible source of cheap labor supply. The whole plan of its use, however, was experimental on account of the nature of the indenture under which the coolies worked.

This book represents a translation and an elaboration of the original study presented for the thesis.

The primary purpose of the work is to present a study of the Chinese laboring under new conditions. It is hoped that it may contribute to the solution of the problem which has agitated different parts of our country in the past few decades, and which has not yet been entirely solved.

It is a pleasure to acknowledge here the kindness of the Chamber of Mines of Johannesburg in placing at the writer's disposal the reports of the Chamber, and in furnishing additional information. The writer wishes also to thank Miss Margaret McLaughlin of the English Department of Teachers College for her valuable English criticism. Finally he wishes to express his deepest obligation and gratitude to Professor Schumacher of Bonn for his numerous suggestions during the preparation of the original of this work.

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ST. LOUIS, MO.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For four thousand years, while empires were rising and falling in western Europe and Asia, the Chinese territory lay undisturbed by its western neighbors, and the people of this vast domain were working out their own history. They had shut out all foreigners by means of the great wall, and were content to remain within the confines of their own territory, not knowing nor caring what other people thought of them, so long as they were unmolested. Even at the close of the fifteenth century, when they had settled in many countries not under the Chinese emperor's suzerainty,¹ they had not ventured beyond the countries immediately surrounding the "Celestial Empire." It is only in comparatively recent times that they have sought their fortunes beyond oriental boundaries. Their emigration into foreign countries has given rise to bitter opposition on the part of some sections of the native population in those countries to which the Chinese have gone. Many troublesome problems have arisen, for the immigrants, by reason of their unusual thrift, have proved themselves to be dangerous competitors. But no opposition to the Chinese has been so persistent as that in South Africa; moreover, few labor experiments of any kind have presented so many interesting problems as those which have grown out of the use of the coolies in that country since the close of the Boer War. The history and significance of this experiment form the subject of this pamphlet.

The subject we have under examination offers two phases for consideration: first, the reasons for the employment of the Chinese in South Africa; and second, the economic significance of that employment. The first phase of the subject requires consideration of (1) the special restrictions under which the Chinese were employed, (2) the relation of the Chinese to the other races in Africa, and (3) the comparison of their introduction and employment in South Africa with their immigration to, and labor in, other lands. The subject involves the treatment of the value of coolie labor, particularly for the mines in the Transvaal, i.e., its consideration as a business enterprise for the mining industry, and as a means of promoting the industrial and agricultural advancement of the Transvaal colony.

¹As early as 1520 the Portuguese found large numbers of Chinese subjects in Java.

The interest in our theme is greatly increased by the originality of the experiment. Its importance is intensified by the influence of the experiment upon the use of Chinese labor in the future. A profitable study of the experiment will involve then a consideration of the aims, of the history, and of the result of the use of the coolies.

In this experiment with coolie labor the Transvaal hoped to avoid the evils which resulted from the use of the coolies in America and Australasia. Therefore, the Transvaal government placed certain limitations upon the introduction of the Chinese, and imposed rigid restrictions upon their employers. Both the laborers and the employers were restricted to definite terms by an indenture provided by the Transvaal authorities and accepted by all parties before the introduction of the laborers. The indenture itself was an experiment, as it had not been tried before in the case of Chinese employed by people of European extraction. It is true that the Chinese had often labored for Asiatic people under indenture, but the terms of these contracts had always been different. This experiment with the Chinese in South Africa was the third method which people of European origin have tried in the use of Chinese coolies. At first the Chinese entered both America and Australasia without restrictions. The antagonism which they provoked, however, resulted in restrictions being imposed. Thus restricted immigration was tried as a second method. But restricted immigration was also unsatisfactory, and the only way left to use the coolies seemed to be under some form of indenture, and this plan was tried in the Transvaal. The failure of the plan is very instructive in its bearing on the use of coolies in the future.

Many, it seems, have not accepted the failure of the experiments in the use of the Chinese coolies in the Transvaal mines as a proof of their inutility in great business enterprises in general. The Chinese Empire continues to be looked upon as a source from which laborers may be drawn to perform difficult and unpleasant work at a low price. The employers in the German protectorates have in recent years employed Chinese coolies in small numbers. In the protectorates, however, there is no significant white population except employers, state officers, and soldiers, and the situation is not likely to change in the near future. In these cases, therefore, there has been no cause for such opposition as was manifested in English South Africa. Besides there never has been a Chinese problem in tropical countries, at least so far as the whites are concerned. There is no possibility for competition in such regions, since the whites, on account of the enervating climate, are unable to

engage in long and continued strenuous physical activity.¹ President Roosevelt thought of the Chinese as a possible source of labor supply in the construction of the Panama Canal, but did not attempt to employ them, probably because of the opposition to the yellow-skinned races in the United States, especially on the Pacific Coast. Also in 1908, when an uncompromising struggle was taking place in California against the continuance of Asiatic, especially Japanese, immigration, the leading farmers and fruit-growers of the state met in convention and sent a memorial to Congress, insisting that since the exclusion of the Chinese immigrants their fruit farms had ceased to be profitable, and that without Chinese labor further progress would be impossible. They therefore requested Congress to remove immigration restrictions.

History affords several such illustrations and it is not difficult to see why the Chinese are so persistently sought. They are competent laborers and learn rapidly to adjust themselves to their work under new conditions. Even under unfavorable labor and living conditions they have shown great efficiency as laborers, as was indicated in the construction of the Central Pacific Railroad. The supply of the Chinese laborers seems to be unlimited, and their living requirements are such that a high wage is not necessary. If these competent laborers could then be employed for a wage not exceeding their lowest living requirements, the profits from their labor would be highly satisfactory. The recognition that the coolies were competent laborers and the belief that they would show their characteristic efficiency when restricted to natives' wages and conditions of employment were among the principal reasons which led the employers in the mining district to make such strenuous efforts to secure their introduction into the Transvaal.

This was a grand misconception on the part of those who urged the

¹ "Labor, especially arduous and continuous labor, is inconsistent with the physical health and mental condition of the white man in the tropics. The vital processes will not stand the strain, and the state of the will does not supply the energy for strenuous exertion. This is especially true in the occupation by which life must be assured—agriculture. The disturbance of tropical soils exposes the laborer to the action of several germs, from which he is relatively protected if he refrains from labor. But to make anything of the tropics, labor of a most arduous variety and in the greatest quantity must be put forth; for while it may not be a necessary condition, it is none the less a historical fact, that the characteristic tropical products which have been profitable in the world's markets—cotton, sugar, and coffee—cannot be raised on a small scale. Owing to these conditions the white race has never been able to support itself by its own efforts in the hot countries; the aid of an acclimatized labor force is the only staff on which it can depend."—Gregory, Keller, and Bishop, *Physical and Commercial Geography*, pp. 137-38.

introduction of the Chinaman. The misconception and the consequent treatment of the coolies led to many difficulties and incidentally presented a phase of Chinese character not brought out so clearly elsewhere, if brought out at all. In addition to this special difficulty we find present all the problems of recent Chinese immigration combined with the race problem in its most violent form. This experiment involves then these two problems. It is the light that it throws upon these problems that leads us to present this special study.

CHAPTER II

CHINESE IMMIGRATION

For many generations the children of the "Celestial Empire" have been seeking their fortunes in strange lands, and, like other immigrants, have met at times with opposition. No immigrants, however, have met with such strenuous, persistent, and continuous opposition from so many different peoples. This fact naturally raises the question whether there are inherent in the Chinese national character certain peculiarities which are the reasons for this opposition. A brief statement here of the history of the Chinese in other lands affords material for an answer to this question.

Until comparatively recent times the Chinese government always opposed the emigration of its subjects into foreign lands. First in 1860 the emperor of China entered into an agreement with England allowing the Chinese, under certain conditions, to emigrate to, and receive employment in, the English colonies, and thus virtually the right of the Chinese to emigrate was established.¹ The opposition to emigration which persisted through these centuries is characteristic of the spirit of the Chinese. They express this spirit in a way that is obnoxious to the white race. This spirit is manifested especially in the care and anxiety exercised by the rulers over the subjects in foreign lands.²

This strong racial and national feeling operated against emigration so that chiefly the less desirable classes of the population sought occupations in other lands. Many chose emigration as a means of earning support for their families, and others for the purpose of evading punishment for crimes committed. Therefore, some of the worst elements

¹ *A Convention between the United Kingdom and China, Respecting the Employment of Chinese*, Blue Book (Cd 2246), pp. 1 ff.

² For the sentiment of the government cf. the following excerpt from an edict of the emperor of China (October 12, 1899): "Since the opening of the treaty ports many of our subjects have been drawn into foreign countries to engage in trade. In the foreign land they retain, however, with unshakable loyalty, their memory of the fatherland. They cannot treasure their native country too highly and this is most commendable. In a former message we requested the governors of the provinces to take all returning emigrants under their especial protection, so that they might enjoy in peace in their homes the money earned in the foreign countries. In our anxiety for the welfare of our subjects, and especially those sojourning in foreign countries, we, herewith, command our ambassadors and consuls as far as is in their power, to extend help and protection to the Chinese in their districts."—H. Gottwaldt, *Die ueberseeische Auswanderung der Chinesen* (Bremen, 1903), pp. 79 ff.

of the Chinese population have been found among the emigrants; the very poor, the unskilled, and in a great many cases criminals or criminally inclined. However they always departed with the intention of returning as soon as circumstances permitted. In 1881 Frederick Ratzel wrote: "On the whole it has been the day laborer and the trader from the lowest classes whom we have had opportunity to compare with the European. Therefore, a well-grounded comparison of the capabilities of each cannot be made."¹ The same may be said today, for the Chinese who were introduced into South Africa are not unlike former emigrants. There are several cases in which the Transvaal government was forced to send laborers back to China because the Superintendent of the Foreign Labor Department found that they had been notorious criminals in China.²

The worst of the emigrant Chinese found their way into distant lands. These lands, however, contain only a small part of the emigrants. We may divide the places to which the Chinese have emigrated into two groups: first, colonies near China, where they have come into contact principally with other yellow races; second, trans-oceanic countries. The estimated number that had emigrated up to 1906 was:

A) Near China—

Formosa.....	2,800,000
Siam.....	2,500,000
Malay Archipelago.....	985,000
Sunda.....	600,000
Hong Kong.....	374,543
Philippines.....	80,000
Indo-China.....	150,000
Macao.....	74,568
Burma.....	40,000
Asiatic Russia.....	25,000
Japan.....	7,000
Korea.....	3,710

B) Distant Lands—

North and South America.....	273,889*
Australasia.....	30,000
South Africa.....	55,000

* In 1880 there were perhaps 135,000 Chinese in the United States, and there are perhaps 90,000 now. Chinese are found in several countries distant from China, as in Cuba, Hawaii, the German protectorates, etc., but they do not need classification as their number and influence have been insignificant.

¹ "Die chinesische Auswanderung seit 1876," *Globus* (1881), XXXIX.

² "There were 2,142 Chinese returned to China in 1905 of which 354 were criminals, 375 sick, 1,416 incompetent because of accidents."—*Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Johannesburg Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 11.

The Spanish in the Philippines, as early as the sixteenth century, were the first to oppose the immigration of the Chinese seriously. After the establishment of the Spanish in 1565, we read of many movements against the Chinese. In 1603 a local war broke out in the islands in which 25,000 Chinese men were killed. There were further demonstrations against the Chinese in 1662, 1709, and 1820. Until 1804 they were forbidden to settle outside of Manila; they dared live only in Parian (a Chinese quarter) inside of Manila, and engage in certain branches of trade subject to definite restrictions.

The strongest opposition to the Chinese immigration, however, has come from the Anglo-Saxons, it being chiefly to English-speaking countries that the immigration has taken place. In these countries one of the chief causes of the antipathy felt toward them is to be found in their racial peculiarities. They hold fast to their own religion, customs, and habits of life. For economic purposes, as we shall see later, and in order to maintain their religious cult, they preserve their secret societies, whose members are pledged to see that their customs are preserved, and that the bones of their dead are returned to China for burial. In clothing and in personal habits the Chinese show themselves to be foreigners, indicating that their chief purpose in the foreign land is to derive from it the greatest personal profit, and to return home to enjoy a life of ease in their own country.¹

This attitude of the Chinese immigrants is shown first by the fact that they have seldom taken their families with them or allowed them to follow. Although up to 1894 the Chinese were allowed to enter the United States and have acquired a great deal of property here, they have never brought their families with them. Sartorius von Walterhausen says: "Practically only Chinese men enter the country, and only in the last years has the number of women immigrants increased to about 2 per cent. In 1880 there were about 2,000 Chinese women in the States. Of these 150-200 were married; the remainder belonged to the prostitution class."² When the Transvaal government decided to use Chinese labor, the expenses of conveying the wives and children to and from Africa, as well as their living expenses while there, were to be paid by the employers of the Witwatersrand mines. Yet the report of the Foreign Labor Department for the Transvaal for the year 1905-6 is

¹ See *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony*, 1904 (Cd 1890), p. 79.

² "Die Chinesen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika," *Tübinger Zeitschrift* (1883), XXXIX, 324.

as follows: "Three women and five children have accompanied the laborers during the past year, whilst one woman and two children have returned to China, leaving a total number of four women and twenty-six children on the Rand."¹

Another illustration of the attitude of the Chinaman in foreign countries toward the institutions and people of the country is afforded by their isolation in all social and political life. This separation of the Chinese and their assembling in "Chinatowns" are additional causes of the opposition to them. They crowd themselves together under insanitary conditions, and live a "closed society" which baffles the police in finding criminals and in maintaining law, order, and morality. Some writers have said that the grounds for the isolation and refusal to share in political activity are found in the opposition of the people among whom they live. This opinion is not entirely correct. H. Gottwaldt says correctly: "The Chinese are nowhere so strongly represented, nowhere have they reached so many-sided developments as they have in Siam. They control the whole economic life and leave all the rough labor, principally farm labor, to the native to perform. It is only through the Chinese that Siam has reached her present development."² Yet in spite of this economic success, they have never sought to exercise political influence. In California, moreover, great efforts were made to teach the Chinese the European standards of civilization. Missions and schools were established and large sums of money were given to carry on the work. The Chinese flocked to the schools, but their only purpose was to learn the language that they might make better progress as laborers and in business. They ceased to attend the schools when they had accomplished this. Similar results were experienced in the mission work. In 1876, after thirty years of missionary effort, there were 246 Chinese in California who had received Christian baptism, or one for every three hundred immigrants. Some of these had given up their adopted faith and returned to China.³ The cause of Chinese isolation is portrayed by von Walterhausen in a sharp contrast of the American with the Chinese, as follows:

Artisans of the white and yellow races will not work in the same room. Irish and yellow servants cannot get along together in the same residence.

¹ *Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, Johannesburg, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 32.

² *Die ueberseeische Auswanderung der Chinesen* (Bremen, 1903), p. 76.

³ Cf. von Walterhausen in his article, "Die Chinesen in den Vereinigten Staaten von Amerika," *Tübingen Zeitschrift* (1883), p. 392.

The quarters of the yellow laborers in the mine regions are separated from those of the whites. The speech of the Chinese is an ear-splitting jargon to the American; the residence contains an unbearable odor for him; the sight of the protruding cheek bones and the characteristically set eyes and yellow skin arouses antagonism in him. On the other hand, the white race appears to the Mongolian to be far from the true civilization in thinking and feeling.¹

A recent writer coming to the defense of the Chinese contends that their isolation in the United States is due, principally, to the refusal of the American to allow them to assimilate. This writer says: "The Chinaman was and is shut out because he is yellow and because he is too industrious, not because he would not make a good American."² It is true that his color and industry, more especially the latter, have contributed largely to the opposition to him. On the other hand, there is no evidence as yet that he will make a good American, as the author seems to imply. The Chinaman and the American represent two radically different civilizations, and racially cannot be harmonized. We therefore do not agree with this writer when she says: "It does, indeed, take two to assimilate, and non-assimilation is the least convincing and most inconsistent of all the arguments against Chinese immigration, in the mouths of those who have not wished them to assimilate nor given them an opportunity to do so, and who do not, even now, recognize that many of them have become intelligent and patriotic Americans."³

The opposition to the Chinese due to political, social, ethical, and racial characteristics is, however, secondary. The chief cause of the hostility is the fear of the economic result from their entrance into industrial life: the fear of them as competitors. This point will be discussed in detail in a later chapter. The competency of the Chinese laborers and their low living requirements make it possible for them to compete to the great disadvantage of the whites. This is the ground for opposition, and the whites have taken advantage of every opportunity and every possible objection to create a sentiment against them.

¹ Von Walterhausen, *op. cit.*, p. 391.

² Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (1910), p. 457.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 458.

CHAPTER III

THE HISTORY OF THE NATIVE LABOR QUESTION IN SOUTH AFRICA

Turning for the moment from the Chinese themselves to the conditions in the Transvaal which necessitated the introduction of foreign laborers, we need but a cursory glance at the periodicals of the English colonies in South Africa during the past century to see that the labor problem there is by no means a new one. Even as early as the seventeenth century the Dutch colonists suffered from a scarcity of laborers and introduced slaves from India to supply the demand. Slaves were used—both natives and Indians being detained in service—until 1833, when slavery was forbidden. Since then the labor difficulty has arisen in its modern form.

The scarcity of laborers was first felt by the farmers of Natal, since Natal was agricultural and required principally season laborers, especially at harvesting and planting time. The demand was not extensive, but a reliable source of supply was absolutely essential in order to carry on farming with any profit at all. The native was wholly unsuited for supplying this demand, because he would work only when compelled to do so in order to get food. For this reason at harvest time, when food was plentiful, the supply of labor was totally inadequate. The natives, therefore, in spite of the large number—more than 800,000—could not supply the demand of a white population of less than 100,000. After the farmers had sought in vain to educate the natives to the point of being willing to perform the season labor with regularity and reliability, they were compelled to introduce the Indian coolies under indenture to supply the demand. These were introduced in 1860—the first experiment in the use of indentured laborers in Africa—and since that time the farmers have had to depend largely upon indentured coolies for their labor supply. Up to the year 1907 about 100,000 coolies had been introduced into Natal under indenture.¹ The Indians, however, so soon as their indentures expired, became merchants and skilled artisans; for this reason a new supply was always required to perform the unskilled labor. The short term of service rendered by the Indian coolies in the performance of unskilled labor made their employment unprofitable. The farmers, unable to get satisfactory results in the use of Indians,

¹ *The Economist* (London), December 14, 1907.

turned their attention again to the native with no better results than before.

Although the labor problem appeared in its modern form in 1833, it did not develop in its more serious aspects until the discovery of the diamond mines in Rhodesia in 1870, and the discovery of the gold mines in the Transvaal in 1889. The development of the diamond industry proceeded without much difficulty on account of labor until the discovery of gold. This development was possible, because the requirements of the farmers did not draw heavily upon the enormous native population. A more important fact in the case of the diamond industry is that the labor was constant and the laborer could be employed in periods of food scarcity, and retained through periods of plenty. Otherwise the managers would have found difficulty in securing labor from this source.¹ But the discovery and development of the gold mines put new energy into every other industry in South Africa, especially in the Transvaal. Not only was there a great demand for labor in the mines, but also an even greater demand in the other industries which were operated in connection with the mining activities. There resulted such a scarcity that all the managers combined in their efforts to secure laborers. They were, however, unsuccessful. The labor situation in Cape Colony became so serious that the government was appealed to. The governor responded by appointing a special commission to investigate labor conditions. This act on the part of the government of Cape Colony in 1890 marks the beginning of the period of critical labor difficulties. The commission in its report to the governor of the colony indicated this scarcity and noted that the cause of the pressure was the fact that the natives had been drawn to the Transvaal to work in the mines.²

The report of this commission was inadequate, since an exhaustive study of the native supply in the whole of South Africa had not been made. In the study of the labor conditions and in the effort to create the supply each colony and community looked to the supplying of its own demands without attempting a statesman-like view of the whole labor difficulty. The report of this commission is characteristic of this short-sightedness. Not only was the report inadequate, but there was

¹ *Report of the Transvaal Labor Commission, 1903, Blue Book (Cd 1894), p. 6.*

² The commission appointed for the investigation was composed of Sir James Sievewright, commissioner of crown lands, and six other citizens. It sought, first, to determine the extent of the scarcity of laborers; and second, to ascertain what measures could be taken to remove the causes of the scarcity.

no effort made to carry out the suggestions offered. It was an easy matter, however, to appoint commissions, and so another followed. This commission,¹ after careful work in collecting a great amount of material, reported that "a want of available farm labor is acutely and increasingly felt in the Western District; the supply of other laborers in the same area is not adequate, and the supply of female servants is insufficient."² It is instructive to note the feeling prevailing at that time in regard to the use of Asiatic laborers: "The commission is strongly opposed to the introduction of Asiatics, and it is not possible that any will be introduced; further discordant elements in the population are not desirable."³ We note here again that the commission does not go beyond a mere report of conditions, and there is still no systematic plan promulgated.

But the scarcity of the laborers was not confined to the farms and domestic service. Cecil Rhodes endeavored to legislate for the scarcity in the diamond mines, and induced Cape Colony to adopt the "Glen Gray Act." By one of its provisions a tax of ten shillings was imposed upon able-bodied male natives not in possession of land under ordinary quit rent or freehold. If the native could convince the magistrate that he had been in service beyond the confines of his district he was permanently exempt from the tax.⁴ The author of this law believed that if the native were taxed he would seek work to meet the payment. He hoped thus gradually to educate the Negroes to become regular laborers. His plan, however, did not produce the desired improvement in the labor supply, and the law was repealed. This was the first direct attempt to relieve the situation by legislation. A still more serious effort was made in the Transvaal at the time of the discovery of gold mines on the Witwatersrand in 1889, by the establishment of the Chamber of Mines.⁵ Among its principal activities was that of pro-

¹ The second commission was composed of six members of the Cape Parliament chosen by the governor.

² See *Report of the Transvaal Labor Commission, 1903*, Blue Book (Cd 1896), p. 3.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 43.

⁵ Reference is made so often to the Chamber of Mines and its work that it will not be out of place to give here a short excerpt from its constitution. It is a private corporation of employers, organized, according to its provisions, "to advance, promote, and protect the mining interests of the Transvaal by the consideration and discussion of all questions connected therewith or incidental thereto, and by the creation and circulation of statistics and information relative thereto, or calculated to be of value or service to such interests, as well as all other means which may from time to time

viding laborers for the mines. The complaints addressed to it on the question of the scarcity of laborers for the mines began with the first meeting and continued without interruption. The first annual report of the Chamber says: "The reports from the different mines of the difficulty of securing and retaining a sufficient number of Kaffirs to carry on the work of the farms and mines are constantly growing more numerous and urgent. There can be no doubt that the supply of Kaffirs at present is totally inadequate; and this most difficult question has been engaging the serious attention of the Chamber." This scarcity of laborers led to such competition among the managers of the mines that the high wages resulting consumed the profits of the industry. In 1890 the Chamber turned to the government in the hope of securing assistance. When it received no help from that quarter it created a special standing committee of its own members to institute extraordinary measures to relieve the conditions. Later in 1891 the Chamber made an appeal to the Volksraad but received no encouragement. The Chamber, therefore, unable to elicit the interest of the state authorities, instituted new methods of recruiting, which it followed without success until 1896. Recognizing again, and this time fully, the futility of its own efforts, the Chamber appealed directly to the government for assistance, insisting that the mines were greatly hindered in their development by the inadequate labor supply. At the same time the Minister of Mines was addressed in similar terms. The government now acted by issuing orders to all officials governing natives that all possible help should be given the employers in trying to secure laborers; and it began on its own part to investigate methods of improving the supply. All efforts were, however, fruitless and the difficulty remained unsolved.

At this juncture the employers proposed to the standing committee the introduction of Chinese coolies on the ground that they had proved themselves good and cheap laborers in Australia. The committee was so hostile to the suggestion that it gave the proposition no consideration whatever. This attitude makes clear the fact that there was great antipathy to the introduction of Asiatic laborers even among the mem-

seem advisable." The members are divided into three classes as follows: (1) ordinary members, i.e., any limited liability company or syndicate, owning Transvaal mining property; (2) extraordinary members, i.e., such companies as mentioned in the first class living outside the Transvaal; (3) honorary members, i.e., all persons interested directly or indirectly in the industry and who will pay an entrance fee of \$15.50. The membership was composed largely of the first class, very few of the third class. (Introduction to the *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1890*).

bers of the Chamber at this time, not long before the introduction of the coolies. The committee continued its effort to secure native laborers, and in 1898 began a new and fuller investigation than had been attempted before. The committee believed that the method of securing the native laborers was inadequate and recommended that efforts be put forth to find means of reaching the supply.¹ It recognized the importance of the labor problem and estimated that the expenses for labor at that time amounted to from 50 to 60 per cent of the whole cost of production. It felt also that dividends must be increased by reducing the cost of labor, which had gradually increased under competitive methods of recruiting.²

During these years not only had the different governments and the Chamber put forth every effort to secure labor, but the individual employers had exercised all their powers. The history of the labor difficulty shows competition among the employers themselves on the one hand, and between the employers and the farmers on the other. The struggle is accompanied by perennial appeals to the government and constant investigations and reports of committees. Nevertheless with all the efforts made the supply became less satisfactory and the demand greater from year to year. Among other things, the employers and the Chamber suggested to the government that the plan of forcing the natives to work would be effective. But such a method was of course impossible under Transvaal law. Besides, the Boer government was not enough interested in the mines which were conducted with foreign capital to concern itself seriously with the question. In the midst of the heated discussion between the Boer authorities and the English mine owners and operators, the whole industry was brought to a standstill by the opening of the Boer War in 1899. Very little was attempted until the year 1903, after its close and after sufficient time had elapsed for the difficulties growing out of it to be settled. In that year the Chamber called into existence the native labor organization. This organization was composed of a body of employees under the

¹ The method used in securing laborers had been unsatisfactory from the first. Recruiting agents, locally known as "touts," went out among the natives and induced them in any way possible to engage for labor in the mines. As they were often secured through misrepresentations, they were dissatisfied with the work of the mines, and caused trouble to managers by running away. These "touts" sold the recruited laborers to the mine that would pay the highest price, and thus encouraged competition and also increased the cost of the labor. The increase did not by any means all go to the natives.

² See *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines*, 1898, pp. 4-5.

direction of a superintendent. All were acquainted with the lives and habits of the natives, and they searched out the unemployed natives and tried to induce them to work in the mines. After the Chamber created this organization, they put all recruiting in the hands of the organization, and the natives on arriving on the Rand were assigned by an official of the organization to one of the mines.¹

Up to 1903 everyone connected with the mines believed that there were enough laborers in South Africa, and that if the government had earnestly tried it could have induced them to engage in work. The employers, therefore, attributed the scarcity to the inactivity of the government. With the change in the government brought about by the war they believed that the scarcity was at an end, and they began to organize the industry on a large scale, only to find that the scarcity was more keenly felt than ever. The Chamber of Mines was then free to organize as it pleased, and it proceeded to meet its problems systematically. The government was ready to do all it could. The Rand party was in power politically and everything was favorable. In spite of these favorable conditions and the combined efforts put forth the supply was inadequate. The employers now realized for the first time that government authorities could not instantaneously transform the enormous mass of native population into regular, efficient laborers. As we have noted, former investigations had ended with appeals to the government and failure; the new government also failed.

Up to the time of the war, despite the many investigations into the native labor supply, there had been no complete examination covering the whole country. The investigations had been made for the employers, for the farmers, and for the different governments, but there had not been a comprehensive examination of the labor supply from the viewpoint of the needs of the industries throughout English South Africa. After the war the investigations assumed a broader basis. Therefore, a conference of representatives of the British colonies under the presidency of the English High Commissioner met at Bloemfontein for the purpose of looking into the condition of labor throughout the whole of the South African colonies. From its conclusions we quote the following significant excerpt:

This conference, after considering all the available statistics and hearing

¹ The plan of recruiting was now materially changed. Men were sent out to recruit, and the assignments made to the different mines prevented further competition between different employers. The combination and the elimination of competition in South Africa followed closely upon the successful combination of capital in the United States and was largely influenced by the success of combination here.

the reports of the highest authorities of the several states, has come to the conclusion that the native population south of the Zambesi does not comprise a sufficient number of adult males capable of work to satisfy the normal requirements of the several colonies, and at the same time furnish an adequate amount of labor for the large industrial centers. Under these circumstances, it is evident to the conference that the opening of new sources of labor supply is necessary in the interest of all the South African states.¹

The members of this conference saw the labor problem from an entirely new point of view, and they realized that the only step now possible was to examine the labor possibilities from this standpoint. Short-sightedness they now recognized had caused them to attribute the labor difficulties to the inactivity and hostility of the Dutch authorities. It was realized that the difficulty lay deeper, and an earnest effort to solve the problem was made. It was for this purpose that on July 3, 1903, the governor of the Transvaal appointed a commission.² The task of the commission was to ascertain the entire labor demand in the Transvaal and to investigate all labor sources in Africa. It is principally from the thorough investigation of this commission that we learn the amount and condition of the labor supply.

¹ See *Report of the Transvaal Native Labor Commission, 1903*, p. 13.

² The commission was composed of twelve leading citizens of the Transvaal with Mr. A. M. Niven as chairman.

CHAPTER IV

THE LABOR FORCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

The demand for labor in the Transvaal, the commission found, was of such a complex nature that the actual number of laborers needed could never be ascertained with complete accuracy. The requirements changed from time to time with the condition of the crops, with the seasons of the year, and with the nature and amount of public activity. Besides, an increased demand might be expected to accompany industrial and agricultural progress. The most important business activities requiring labor in the Transvaal were the mines, agriculture, and the railroads. The more important minor activities were the building of canals, harbors, bridges, roads, etc.

Information about the number of laborers required for agriculture is somewhat indefinite on account of the lack of statistics upon this point. The data available, however, show that there is a steady increase in the demand due to extensive agricultural activities. South Africa is capable of great agricultural development, but this development is dependent to a large degree upon the extension of the means and ways of transportation and an adequate supply of labor. Indeed, the future of South Africa depends to a large extent upon its agriculture. Enormous stretches of arable land lie fallow for want of means of transportation, or are cultivated by the most primitive methods, due to the lack of irrigation and farm machinery. As a result of this the Transvaal imports large quantities of agricultural products for consumption. The table on p. 18 showing articles imported will indicate the deficiencies of home production. There can be no doubt that with a sufficient number of laborers, the Transvaal could easily be supplied from home production with all the articles of consumption named. In fact, agricultural conditions were so improved with the increase of laborers due to the introduction of Chinese in 1904 that in the years 1904-6 an increase in exports and a decrease in imports was shown, although the crops of these years were poor on account of droughts and locusts.¹

¹ See *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1906*, Blue Book (Cd 3528), p. 36.

In the first six months of the year 1903 the Transvaal imported:¹

Articles for Consumption	Value
Cattle.....	\$ 583,810
Meat (preserved).....	1,639,930
Meat (fresh and game).....	2,124,045
Rice.....	1,085,340
Flour.....	1,224,045
Oats.....	910,895
Butter.....	861,760
Milk.....	775,805
Eggs.....	305,170
Fresh fruit.....	309,395
Biscuits.....	223,500
Bran.....	146,500
Cheese.....	140,000
Barley.....	13,500
Beans.....	18,000
Hay.....	26,500
Peas.....	2,300
Rye and wheat.....	43,000
Fruit (canned).....	165,000
Honey.....	4,000
Jams.....	150,000
Meal.....	90,000
Pickles.....	80,000
Salt.....	40,000
Vegetables.....	265,000
Miscellaneous.....	390,000
Total.....	\$11,627,495

In 1903 the need of laborers in the mines was keenly felt, as a statement of the condition of the mines at that time will show. In 1899 the employers of the Rand district operated 6,240 stamps with 111,697 native laborers, while in 1903 they were operating only 3,724 stamps out of a total 7,145 stamps ready for operation. They estimated the requirement at 5,612 whites and 117,173 natives to put into operation all of the mines then ready. This does not include new mines, nor the extension of the industry to the territory ready for development. The accompanying table presents an estimate of the whole demand in the Transvaal in 1903:

¹ See *Report of the Transvaal Labor Commission: Minutes and Proceedings, 1903*, Blue Book (Cd 1897), p. 556.

Occupation	No. Required	No. at Work	Shortage
Agriculture.....	80,000	27,715	52,285
Mines.....	197,644	68,820	128,824
Other industries*	69,684	69,684	.....
Railroads—			
a) Repair work.....	16,000	12,402	3,598
b) New work.....	40,000	3,848	36,152
Total	403,328	182,469	220,859

* The number required for "other industries" has been estimated at the actual number at work (1903), and in this item no shortage is shown, not because shortage does not exist, but because evidence as to the requirement is not forthcoming. See *Report of the Transvaal Labor Commission, 1903*, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 13.

The demand for laborers in 1903 was much greater than before the war for several reasons. The natives had sold their cattle to the army at a high price, and thus they were not compelled to work for their daily food. They were not inclined to leave the quiet life of the "kraals" where all necessary comforts were provided by the women. The increased demand for laborers appeared everywhere, and is shown by the requirements in various villages in different parts of the country, as estimated before and after the war. The statistics are as follows:

	Before	After
Mafeking.....	24	45
Kalk Bay.....	40	53
Hammersmith.....	20	80
Mowbray.....	60	80
Dundee.....	15	30
Queenstown.....	40	75
Salisbury.....	80	156
Woodstock.....	55	223

In examining the labor conditions in the Transvaal we cannot leave out of account the situation outside of the Transvaal. While our study has to do with the Transvaal mines, much of the labor for them comes from other regions, and it thus becomes necessary to examine those regions to see the condition, the fitness of the natives for, and the attitude of the native toward, mine labor there. We find that some natives prefer to work away from home and others prefer to stay at home. Some like mine work and others object to it. Probably no laborers are more influenced in the selection of their work by their feelings than the natives. Also climatic conditions materially influence the supply

in the Transvaal. We produce here a table giving the total population of South and Central Africa in 1903:

South Africa—*	
Cape Colony.....	1,652,036
Natal.....	791,010
Orange River Colony.....	129,787
Southern Rhodesia.....	563,271
German Southwest Africa.....	300,000
Bechuanaland Protectorate.....	147,000
Swaziland.....	60,000
Basutoland.....	262,561
Transvaal.....	605,666
Portuguese East Africa.....	1,815,180
Central Africa—*	
Northern Rhodesia.....	565,000
British Central Africa.....	900,000
Uganda Protectorate.....	4,000,000
Portuguese Northeast Africa.....	1,815,180
Total.....	13,597,691

* See *Report of the Transvaal Labor Commission, 1903*, Blue Book (Cd 1896), p. 59.

Sir Godfrey Lagden, Transvaal labor commissioner, calculated that one native in every eight to ten of the whole population is capable of working in the mines.¹ The statistics for 1903 show that only one in every eleven living in the Transvaal was working at all, and that one in twenty-five was at work in the mines. It is quite evident that, so far as numbers go, there were laborers enough to do all the work. A study of the character of the natives will show us why they did not do it.

¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58-59.

CHAPTER V

CAUSES OF THE SCARCITY OF LABOR

We have followed the history of the labor difficulties and have noted the supply and demand, but we have not demonstrated the necessity of securing outside laborers. We wish to note in this chapter the reasons for the inadequacy of the native supply, and especially to inquire whether the causes of the scarcity are of a permanent nature.

In the first place there are a number of temporary conditions producing idleness among the natives, among which are the effects of the Boer War, the lowering of the natives' wages by the mine employers, and the difficulties the natives encounter in reaching the mines on account of insufficient transportation facilities. These conditions are not very significant, inasmuch as a systematic effort to remove them will bring about satisfactory results in a reasonable period of time. They are now very rapidly disappearing, for the employers have come to realize they must depend upon the native for their supply, however inadequate this source may be. The more important reasons for the scarcity of labor are those of a permanent nature, namely the habits of life, the customs, and the character of the natives.

There are other causes which are more effective in determining the native to avoid work in the mines. Among these may be mentioned the danger inherent in mining, as shown in the high death-rate among the natives. The new climatic conditions and the change in the mode of living, as well as the inability of the native to care for himself under such conditions, raise the death-rate to an alarming figure. The accompanying table (p. 22) shows the actual condition of native mortality from 1903-6.¹

We note here a decrease from 71 deaths per 1,000 laborers in 1903 to 35 in 1906, but there is a limit beyond which the number cannot be decreased, and this limit is still partly prohibitive. The laborer has a very limited understanding of health requirements, and learns them so slowly that there is little hope of reducing the death-rate. In 1903 the health conditions in the mines and compounds were wretched. An

¹ See Blue Books (Cd 2025), 1904, p. 45; (Cd 3528), 1907, p. 131; and *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1904*, p. 46. The number of deaths from sickness among the Chinese in the mines was 11 per 1,000, and among whites 14 per 1,000.

Month	1903	1904	1905	1906
January.....	61	69	48	47
February.....	45	47	42	43
March.....	49	54	42	33
April.....	52	54	38	32
May.....	79	85	46	34
June.....	88	97	55	34
July.....	112	113	53	33
August.....	78	88	48	31
September.....	69	79	40	31
October.....	65	76	44	36
November.....	79	87	53	33
December.....	78	90	65	32
No. per 1,000 per year.....	71	78	48	35

awakened public conscience in England and in South Africa required improvements to be made, and in 1906 the death-rate had been reduced as much as lay in the power of the mine operators and public health authorities. Further improvement depends upon the natives' understanding and practicing personal health requirements. The importance of this point is emphasized by the accompanying table which gives the death-rate for each sickness:¹

Sickness	No. of Deaths	Percentage
Pulmonary diseases*.....	643	41.7
Brain fever.....	122	7.9
Dysentery.....	329	20.9
Scurvy.....	186	12.4
Swamp fever.....	36	2.3
Other sicknesses.....	139	9
Accidents.....	86	5.8

* Pulmonary diseases (for 1904) 3,903; 60 per cent of all deaths.

It is, however, as has been said above, the character of the native that is the chief cause of the labor difficulty. His necessities of life, food, and clothing are exceedingly simple. His wants are few, even when he lives among civilized people. He considers only the present and the things of the day. If he is secured against hunger and cold—in many parts of Africa against hunger only—he leaves his work and seeks the satisfaction of his crude desires, usually in those things which are most injurious to himself, especially in alcoholic drinks. He does not understand how to provide for the future; therefore he makes little effort to acquire valuable property, even where he has had the advan-

¹ See *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines*, 1904, p. 46.

tages of civilization.¹ The progress of the native will be especially slow in Africa, because the fact that the European population there is relatively small will compel him to remain a long time isolated from the benefits of modern civilization. Africa will be settled very slowly by Europeans, so that for a long time, at least, there will be a small white population by the side of an enormous native one. This will leave the native practically free in his modes of life. It is quite impossible for the South African governments to extend their institutions rapidly, and the natives will make no effort to hasten progress. They inhabit a wide stretch of country over which their cattle roam at will, grazing the entire year, requiring the owner to provide neither food nor shelter. The native, therefore, can live by hunting and fishing, and be supplied at all times with an abundance of meat. Other necessities of life can be provided for him by the wife and children who do the field work. The clothing is likewise provided without much effort. In 1904 the whole amount of goods sold to the natives in South Africa amounted to less than \$1.00 per head of the population.² In Central Africa the goods imported amount to very much less. The native, therefore, not being compelled to work, remains in his "kraal" satisfied with what Nature brings to him. The following table, showing the amount of goods imported into Natal and Basutoland for native trade, indicates the limits of his wants.³

	Natal	Basutoland
1894.....	\$ 700,410	\$490,000
1895.....	675,500	350,000
1896.....	775,350	520,000
1897.....	644,250	650,000
1898.....	821,500	500,000
1899.....	800,00	465,000
1900.....	803,200	
1901.....	1,150,000*	
1902.....	1,325,250*	

* In the years 1901-2 the whites used articles imported for native use, and this explains the greater figures for these years.

The condition of the Negro in the southern states of this country indicates even more clearly that his development is very slow. Here

¹ William T. Thom, "The Negroes in Sandy Springs, Maryland," *Labor Bulletin* No. 38, Washington, D.C. The progress of the savage in Africa will be much slower than that which has characterized the Negro in this country.

² See *Report of the Transvaal Native Labor Commission, 1903*, Blue Book (Cd 1894), p. 35.

³ *Ibid.*

he does only the work necessary to satisfy his limited wants.¹ Without further discussion it is evident from what has been said that the native in Africa will not supply the labor needs for any permanent advance in the agricultural and industrial interests of the Transvaal. We shall proceed at once to investigate other sources of supply.

¹ U. Bradford Laws says of the Negroes in Calumet, La.: "Each family has a garden about its house, but people are discouraged from taking land in the field as they never raise anything upon it. Very few cultivate even the house gardens, though many of them spade and prepare the land. They rarely have enterprise enough to buy seed." —"Negroes of St. Claire and Calumet, La.," *Labor Bulletin No. 38*.

CHAPTER VI

WHITE LABORERS

The employment of whites as unskilled laborers in the mines would have been the ideal solution of the labor problem, and would still be best for Africa, if whites could be used with profit to the mines and farms and without serious social dangers. It is important that South Africa increase the white population as rapidly as possible, but it is more important that it maintain a high standard of living among the whites—a standard that will insure the future of the white race in South Africa and prevent irreparable harm to the whole social fabric. Serious social dangers would follow the introduction of a low class of European whites to supply the labor demand. Besides, economic conditions make it impossible to use European white labor. The whole South African industry is inseparable from a cheap labor supply in its historical development and present condition. An immediate change to high-priced labor would entail serious consequences to all industries, especially mining. Cheap labor is essential for the mines from the simple fact that only the richest mines could be worked with high-priced labor, and the number of rich mines is very limited.

The importance of the poorer mines is indicated by the following figures² showing the production for 1903. The production amounted to about \$75,000,000 taken from 7,000,000 tons of ore at a cost of \$50,000,000—a profit of \$3.57 per ton. Of the 7,000,000 tons of ore, about 4,000,000 were taken from mines yielding a profit of only \$2.35 per ton. Of the \$50,000,000, the cost of production, about \$30,000,000, went for wages; and from this sum about \$17,000,000 to about 11,000 white laborers at an average wage of \$1.605 yearly, and the remaining \$13,000,000 to about 75,000 natives at an average wage of \$171.25. The poorer mines produced a profit of \$9,000,000 and 30,000 natives were employed in them. These natives received, besides food, \$4,500,000 in wages. In case laborers had been employed who had received higher wages, for instance whites, at a wage of \$3.00 per day with double the ability of the native in turning out work, the cost of labor itself would have been \$15,000,000, making all the mines in the latter class—

² *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony*, 1904, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 251.

or nearly 60 per cent of all mines—unprofitable and their abandonment certain.

For this economic reason, apart from the difficulty and danger of employing white and black laborers in the same industry, it seemed clear that whites could not be used for the work of the South African mines, and there was no other plan open but the introduction of Chinese coolies. This was the conclusion that the Transvaal authorities reached in 1904, and through the influence of the leading colonial statesmen the mother country was induced to make a treaty with the Chinese government. The agreement was signed at London, May 13, 1904. The ordinance had been passed by the colonial government in January of the same year, and plans were already made for the use of these laborers. In June of the same year the first shipment was ready for service. The shipments continued till 1906, when the number in service had reached 55,000. It was at this time that there was a change of government and the new ministry determined, after careful consideration, to have the coolies returned to China as soon as their indentures expired. The failure of the experiment and the causes of the return of the coolies to their native land will form the subject of the remaining part of this work.

CHAPTER VII

THE INTRODUCTION OF THE CHINESE LABORERS

The idea of supplying the labor demand of the Transvaal by means of Chinese coolies was not new in 1903. During the years of struggle for a sufficient labor supply such a suggestion had often been made, but no one had come forward to suggest a method by which they might be employed. Even the agitation for employing this class of laborers had found no systematic support, and the recurring suggestion met with such positive opposition that no general interest in the proposal had been aroused. At the close of the Boer War, when the Transvaal seemed ready for an unhindered development of its promising agricultural and its enormous mineral resources—especially its gold mines—the labor problem was present in its acutest form. At this psychological moment, when everyone saw the need of labor and wished, for his own interests, as well as for the good of the community, that the development might proceed unhindered, the Transvaal government, at the initiative of the Chamber of Mines, determined to introduce Chinese coolies for use exclusively in Witwatersrand mines.

The proposal of the Chamber and the government to introduce coolie laborers precipitated a spirited contest, which was waged during the few months in which a commission appointed by the governor of the colony was investigating the condition of the native labor supply,¹ and while the Colonial Council was debating the terms of the ordinance under which the Chinese were to be introduced. Apparently every white inhabitant of the Transvaal took part in the discussion by expressing his approval or disapproval. The other South African colonies and even Australia took sides. The opposition was intense, not only among the white laborers in the mines, but also among the people engaged in occupations other than mining.² The causes of the bitter opposition to the use of the coolies do not appear upon a superficial examination. There is not a proletariat of unskilled whites in South Africa as there is in America and in Australia, and yet the opposition was as strongly manifested as it ever was in either of the other places. Upon a closer

¹ See discussion, chap. IV.

² See *Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony*, 1904, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 337.

and more critical examination, however, we find that the objection to the coolies in Africa was the same as in America and Australia—the fear of competition of coolie labor with white labor. But this fear of competition was intensified in South Africa by certain local conditions—the native problem and the problem of the Indian coolie.

As we have seen from the discussion of the native-labor question in the South African colonies, there is an abundant supply of natives there. We have also seen that the labor difficulty was due to the unwillingness of the native to work, which in turn was caused by the limited nature of his wants and his ability to supply them without much effort on his part. The idleness of the native had been a problem of long standing which the various governments had tried earnestly to solve through various measures, the most important of which were the education of the native children and the establishment of a system of native taxes. From the history of the native problem we have seen the deep interest which both the government authorities and the people manifested in the native. In the first place they needed his labor, and in the second place they wished to work out a better system of native control. As the white population increased and agriculture improved, the question of changing the tribal system and securing a satisfactory and efficient means of land occupation, among other problems, engaged more and more the attention of the people and government. It was recognized that the native problem was growing more serious and this made the people hesitate to take a step which might possibly complicate it. This difficulty with the native became one of the local objections to the introduction of the Chinese. The process of crowding the native into smaller territory required that he adjust himself gradually to the standards of civilization in his methods of living and of acquiring a livelihood. We have previously noted how slow this process has always been with the natives of Africa. We have seen that the transformation takes place only through a process of education and through contact with the whites under as systematic labor as can be insisted upon. Now, it was argued, if the Chinaman should be admitted and should become a permanent settler, he might turn his attention to agriculture as he has done in other places. The result of this would be that the native, crowded and hampered, would abandon agriculture and revert to his old system of living, which removes him from the control and influence of the white settlers. Even if the coolie could be limited to the mines, he would ultimately supplant the native there, and the latter would return to his "kraal," leaving the government with the difficulty of

forcing a still larger number of unemployed natives to adjust themselves to advancing civilization. We do not need to follow this discussion farther, as it is of a social-ethical and national-political nature and touches the economic question only in so far as these conditions brought about certain limitations under which the Chinese were introduced and under which they labored in the Transvaal.

A second local situation that had much to do with creating the opposition to the introduction of the coolie laborer was caused by the Asiatic problem with which the English South African colonies had to deal. The experience with the Indian coolies in South Africa led most people to believe that a similar result would follow the introduction of the Chinese, and that the Chinaman would actually become a serious competitor of the white citizen. The knowledge of the history of Chinese immigration into America and Australasia, countries in many respects similar to South Africa, intensified this feeling.

For a half century, commencing in 1859, the people of Natal had attempted to use Indian coolies introduced under indenture for the purpose of performing unskilled labor, with the result that they spread all over the South African colonies.¹ They entered into lively competition with the whites, and after their indentures expired did not confine themselves to the unskilled labor for which they were introduced. A member of the Transvaal Council described the situation in the following words: "They are in the neighboring colony of Natal. The white man is ousted by the Indian in the lower walks of trade and commerce, in the market gardens and fruit growing, in town property and land. In the government employ and railways, in hundreds of ways they are cutting out some of the most desirable classes of white settlers."² The

¹ See *Report of the Transvaal Labor Commission, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1896), p. 4.

The beginning of the oriental labor system in South Africa dates back to 1859, when the land-owners of Natal petitioned for permission to introduce Indians under indenture for use on the farms. Their petition was supported in the following words: "Independently of measures for developing the labor of our own natives, we believe your Excellency will find occasion to sanction the introduction of a limited number of coolies or other laborers from the East in aid of the new enterprises on the coast lands, to the success of which sufficient and reliable labor is absolutely essential; for the fact cannot be too strongly borne in mind that on the success or failure of these rising enterprises depend the advancement of the colony or its sudden and rapid decline. Experimental cultivation has abundantly demonstrated that the issue depends solely on a constant labor supply." As a result of this policy the Indian population in Natal has grown until it is greater than the white population. See *Annals of the American Academy of Social and Political Science*, XXXIV, No. 2, 177.

² See *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1897), p. 275.

competition which arose between the whites and the Indian settlers is indicated by the statement of a witness before the Transvaal Labor Commission, given under oath. He says: "I see the Indians as carpenters, and I see them in other trades. They work cheaper than the European. The European must either get out of the country or starve."¹ This statement, though somewhat exaggerated, is essentially true. The competition into which the Indians entered with the whites led to the exclusion acts in all the South African colonies. Out of the attempt to prevent further immigration into South Africa from the home country, and also to prevent local migration, has grown the so-called "Asiatic Problem," the solution of which is not expected in the near future. A large part of the citizenship of South Africa believed that the experience with the Indians would be repeated in the introduction of the Chinese.² But people did not need to observe the work of the Indians to see what the Chinese might and could do. Between the years 1889 and 1903, 930 Chinese had entered the Transvaal in spite of the exclusion laws.³ The coolies had not sought or performed unskilled labor, but had undertaken independent enterprises, and had shown what might be accomplished if their numbers were sufficiently increased.⁴

These conditions in South Africa supplied a concrete example of the results of competition with Asiatic laborers, but they alone did not determine the opposition and the limiting terms under which the coolies were finally introduced. The history of the experience with the Chinese

¹ See *Report of the Transvaal Labor Commission: Minutes and Proceedings, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd. 1897), p. 550.

The Natal Census Report for 1904 gives the following statistics regarding the occupations of the whites and Indians:

	Europeans	Asiatics
Storekeepers (general)	658	1,260
Storekeepers' assistants	1,252	1,323
Bakers and confectioners	213	78
Butchers and assistants	306	42
Grocers and assistants	425	75
Restaurant keepers	64	26

In addition to this list, there was a greater number of Asiatics in thirty-nine of the leading vocations and enterprises than of whites. This indicated pretty clearly what the Chinese could do if they were given a chance. See *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Sciences*, XXXIV, No. 2, 178.

² Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 38.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 298.

⁴ "The unindentured Chinese in the Transvaal are chiefly laundrymen, hawkers, and small tradesmen."—Letter from the secretary of the Chamber of Mines to the author in March, 1908.

in California and in Australasia was well known in South Africa. Let us look into this history, so far as it sheds light upon our problem. With the discovery of gold in California in 1848 the Chinese entered this country (California), principally as goldseekers, some as independent men working mines for themselves, and some as wage laborers.

As the gold fever, however, passed away and their services were no longer required in this industry, they entered into the sharpest competition in the manufactures and in handicraft, in the fishing industry, and agriculture. They entered first merely as wage-earners in the manufactures and in handicraft, and gradually proved their ability to compete successfully in these vocations. These occupations served as a school for the Chinese, who were soon able to enter business enterprises for themselves, and were presently engaged in house industry and small manufacturing. In a little while they became large manufacturers, and employed their own people as laborers. The Chinaman always had another of his own race to work by his side as merchant, who would dispose of the products he had manufactured. Naturally as he was able to secure an unlimited number of Chinese laborers, and was skilled in managing them, the white competitor could not withstand his opposition.¹

By 1880 the Chinaman had proved himself to be an indispensable factor in the construction of railways, in the draining of swamp lands for cultivation, in the building of canals, and in many of the other enterprises that helped to develop California's vast natural resources.² He had also taken a firm place as a laborer, as a handicraftsman, and even as an employer in the manufacture of cigars, cigar boxes, cigarettes, shoes, shirts, and in the converting of wool, silk, and hemp into cloth. His adaptability to the industrial and economic situation is shown by the varied vocations in which he was found working with extraordinary success, such as laundering and tailoring, in addition to those mentioned above. His persistent competition in these lines forced many whites into other occupations and business enterprises in which production soon exceeded consumption; therefore in these new industries the effect of Chinese activity, cheaper production and underselling, was soon felt. An unsettled condition was soon perceived in local production and trade which was attributed to this activity. The manufacturing and laboring classes alike arose in the strongest opposition to this alien encroachment. Moreover the coolies had also been extensively employed by the large farmers in vegetable, fruit, and wheat culture. As the small

¹ *Handwoerterbuch der Staatswissenschaft* (2d revised ed.), III, 46.

² See *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony*, 1904, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 77.

farmers could not compete with this cheap labor they also joined the forces opposed to alien immigrants.¹ Finally, the American merchant classes entered the opposition because the Chinese competed with them and did not use their merchandise. The bitterness of the opposition led to the limitation of coolie immigration in 1882 and in 1894 to the passing by Congress of the Chinese Exclusion Act.² Since the passage of this act the Chinaman has been limited to ever narrower spheres of action because of the persistent opposition, hatred, envy, and antagonistic legislation of the Americans;³ yet he continues as an efficient laborer in certain vocations in the city, and as a mine laborer.⁴

In Australasia the Chinese have been treated similarly. There, as in the United States, the competition of the coolies with the whites was the middle point toward which all contentions against him centered. The white laborer and employer each took his position with reference to the Chinese question as he felt himself touched by competition.⁵ One writer expresses the situation as follows: "The Chinese with their restless emulation and their low living requirements threatened to drive the whites from the field of labor."⁶ As in America, so in Australasia, the Chinese were introduced into the country to work in the mines, but were excluded from the country before the end of the century.

The success of the Chinese is due to their willingness to labor incessantly under conditions which are impossible for the American or European. The residence of the Chinaman is his shop, his food rice, his clothing in general the most simple. He has neither social nor political obligations, and if his activity is bringing him the desired result, finds pleasure in devoting his entire time to his work. He has few people dependent upon him, and those few, living in China where the

¹ *Handwoerterbuch der Staatswissenschaft* (2d ed.), III, 47.

² See *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 78.

³ In California many acts of the city councils are aimed at the elimination of Chinese competition. For instance, a laundry license, when the laundry has only one horse, is \$2.00 per month, with two horses, \$4.00, with no horse, \$15.00. Again hucksters are charged \$2.00 if they have a horse and wagon, and \$10.00 if they have none (Seward, *Chinese Immigration*, pp. 239 ff.).

⁴ Chinese are employed in the gold mines in California and the coal mines of British Columbia. See *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1904*, pp. 78-79.

⁵ See *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs of the Transvaal, etc., 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 78.

requirements are few, need very little.¹ One writer says: "The reason that the American laborer and merchant experienced such sharp competition from the Chinese is explained as much by those characteristics of the coolies which lead them to adjust themselves to the customary method of production, as it is by the fact that they have demands for fewer of the necessities of life."² This does not mean that the Chinese work for smaller wages than those demanded by the whites. The fact is the Chinese are not cheap laborers; they demand the current wages and refuse to work for less. It is due to this very fact that much of the difficulty arose in the Transvaal mines. Thanks to the endurance, the laborious patience, the thrift, and adaptability of the Chinese, they can displace the whites at the same wage. Upon this point a recent writer says:

In the discussion of the Chinese labor competition only two conspicuous qualities of the Chinese laborer himself are commonly mentioned: his thrift and his laborious patience; yet he has several other characteristics of even greater pertinence to the question. Free Chinese labor never remains cheap for any great length of time. In California they are receiving on an average twice as much wages as in 1882 and more than similar classes of naturalized Europeans. They are not only organized more thoroughly and minutely into unions than Americans, but they have an adaptability and a keenness which enable them to distribute themselves quickly to the districts and the occupations where competition is least and wages highest. They have left factory labor and washing because wages are too low, although the Chinese laundrymen are paying twice the wages they paid twenty years ago. In fact, among the fifty or sixty thousand Chinese remaining in California, the most of whom were originally laborers, the majority are now the owners of small independent businesses or employed in small independent undertakings. In Hawaii, where the Chinese are preferred to any other class of common labor, the complaint is that the Chinamen will not remain laborers and now expect to make white men's profits in their business enterprises.³

The Chinese have reached this efficiency in spite of the fact that they are old laborers, having for the most part come to America previous to 1894 when the Exclusion Act was passed. They are sought as domestic servants and for agricultural labor, and they are much

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 79.

² "Arbeiterfrage und Lohn-Politik von St. Bauer," *Jahrbücher für Nationalökonomie und Staatswissenschaft* (1891), p. 650.

³ *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, XXXIX No. 2, 128.

more efficient than the Japanese and the whites of a similar class. A writer says:

Since the Chinese have become relatively very few among the California wage-earners, their superiority to other foreigners, and even to the inferior grades of white American labor, which alone are available for the occupations in which the Chinese are chiefly engaged, has caused them to become the standard of efficiency by which other labor is measured. Their wages have steadily risen and they have almost wholly deserted the lower-paid manufactures and common labor. Their efficiency, sobriety, and integrity are now continually contrasted with the unsatisfactory qualities of white tramp laborers and of the variegated foreigners who have taken their places. These characteristics of the Chinese make it possible for them to accumulate wealth, to compete with profit under the hardest circumstances when the whites would not be able to earn a livelihood; therefore, the Chinaman provokes the fear and envy of the whites.¹

The South African knew these characteristics of the Chinese. The best that those favoring their introduction into the Transvaal could say for them was:

There is an American experiment which shows that it will not do to receive the Chinaman as a simple immigrant. He is a very undesirable citizen and has an unpleasant way of not doing the hard work for which he is wanted and of insinuating himself into the more congenial occupations of petty commerce and light labor. Consequently, if he is introduced at all, it must be on a system of rigid contract, which shall keep him to mine work, isolate him from the community, and provide for his deportation when he has served his term.²

The opposition to the Chinese, as has been set forth in the foregoing pages, and the consequent agitation, determined definitely that the only possible way of using the Chinese laborer in South Africa was under specific restrictions.

The limitations forced upon the Chinese were the following:³ (1)

¹ Coolidge, *Chinese Immigration* (New York, 1910), p. 400.

² *Further Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1895), pp. 169-70.

³ It is not a mere accident that the planks in the anti-Chinese platforms in the United States, in Canada, in Australasia, and in South Africa have been practically identical. Summed up they are as follows: (1) the non-assimilation by the Chinese of the Western ideas and customs; (2) the hoarding spirit inherent in the Chinese, so that the greater part of their earnings is either taken with them out of the country or remitted to their relatives in China; (3) the refusal by the Chinese to consume local products, and their preference to trade with their own people; (4) the successful competition of Chinese labor brought about by (a) the willingness of the Chinese to work longer hours, and (b) the very low standards of living among them, as a result of which they can exist and live in relative comfort on a very much smaller wage than would decently maintain a white man and his family.

laborers were introduced under indenture; (2) the laborers were to be returned to China as soon as they could be supplanted by native laborers or as soon as machinery could be substituted; (3) they were limited to the mines and allowed to perform only unskilled labor in so far as their services were required to supplement the native-labor supply in the mines.

In addition to these more general limitations, there were in the ordinance under which they were introduced specific restrictions as to their work in the mines. The character of these restrictions was determined by the experience of other nations in the use of Chinese, by the experiences the employers had had with the natives, and by the resistance offered to the introduction of the Chinese by citizens—a combination of circumstances not very favorable to the success of the Chinese in their work. A strong effort was made by the government to introduce into the ordinance restrictions which would prevent such a state of affairs as had risen in America and in Australasia. The government officials profited by the knowledge of the nature of the Chinese immigrants elsewhere and the history of their employment. Thus, so far as knowledge went, the government was in an excellent position to carry out its work well. There had been nearly a year's campaign in which every possible objection to the Chinese had been raised and discussed. Upon a close study of the whole situation one is impressed with the effort of the members of the government to proceed with caution, and avoid any possible error. They were unselfish in their devotion to the interests of the Transvaal and believed this introduction necessary. It is equally certain that the Chamber of Mines was cautious, because the compensation for the immense outlay of introducing the laborers and training them for service could come only from a long period of work. The cost of returning the laborers would fall upon the employers who composed the Chamber; compensation would be greater if the laborers were retained longer in service. It was, therefore, in the interest of the employers to retain all laborers as long as was possible. An important element in the calculation also was the belief that the Chinese introduced could be retained and that the initial cost would not have to be repeated at the expiration of the contract. For the reasons mentioned and also from observation of the conduct of those concerned in this experiment it is evident that they exerted themselves to the utmost to make the experiment a success. They did not, however, fully appreciate the difficulties or the nature of the Chinese, and we shall later see that much trouble arose from this lack of appreciation.

With full knowledge of the opposition to coolie labor in South Africa on the part of citizens, the English government signed a convention with China for the introduction of the indentured coolies (1904), after the passage of the Transvaal Labor Ordinance designating the terms under which the laborers might be introduced. The restrictions imposed upon the laborers by the ordinance, not already mentioned, may be summarized as follows: (1) Both laborers and employers were subjected to the statutes of the Transvaal colony, so far as there were not special provisions in the ordinance for their government, conduct, labor, and control in the mines. (2) The importers of the Chinese were to be their employers. Only employers on the Witwatersrand mines who had secured a special shipping license from the Transvaal authorities could import and employ Chinese. (3) The coolies could perform only unskilled labor in these mines. The employers in case they assigned to the coolies other labor were heavily fined. The coolies were forbidden to follow any trade, to acquire any property, or to have an interest in any personal property or real estate, or to engage in any independent enterprise of any kind. (4) The laborers were limited to the mine premises, being permitted to leave only for a period of forty-eight hours and then only under special permit.

The ordinance itself, under which the coolies were introduced, was similar to a regular law. It stated definite things that the laborers could and could not do; it maintained the regular machinery of the government for the enforcement of its terms; that is, the regular courts, punishments, and prisons. In other words the ordinance was a law with special application, in that it applied only to the Chinese and the employers of the Witwatersrand district, and to these by mutual agreement. As was found later the very nature of this special arrangement had in it possibilities for trouble.

The Chinese were recruited for service in the mines by the Labor Importation Agency of the Chamber of Mines. This agency was subject to, and supervised by, the representatives of the Transvaal and Chinese governments.¹ Hong Kong was the central dépôt in which all contracts were signed and from which all laborers were shipped during the first year. Mr. Cowen, a capable and experienced officer, supervised the shipping.² As the laborers were secured principally from North China the dépôt at Hong Kong was closed at the end of the first

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 25.

² *Ibid.*, (Cd 2401), p. 81.

year, and the agency afterward recruited and shipped through Chifu and Changwantu.¹ The duties of the government officials were to supervise the importation in order to enforce the provisions of the ordinance; to see especially that the coolies understood its terms and entered into their contract after a thorough understanding of its provisions; to see that the laborers were in no way forced to enter service in the Transvaal.² The actual recruiting was the work of the agency's representatives, who were paid a definite sum for each Chinaman recruited. These representatives were required to have a license from the agent of the Transvaal government stationed in China,³ but they were to a large extent irresponsible; their chief aim was to get the laborer's consent to go, and there was no way of ascertaining whether they had done this by means of false representations or not. After inducing the coolie to enlist they would get him through his medical examination, and have him sign his contract. They did not make inquiries about the character of the coolies they recruited; they rather sought those who would enlist with the least discussion and explanation. These agents obtained the aid of the Chinese in the process of recruiting, by inducing the heads of families or the leaders of the guilds to act as agents and solicitors for them in engaging coolies.⁴ Chinese communities, too, as in all cases of Chinese emigration, seized the opportunity to rid themselves of some of their worst members. Some who had committed crimes also sought this method of escape.⁵

In spite of the indifferent method of recruiting, the coolies on the whole did not differ materially from those coolies who formerly emigrated into America and other countries which admitted them. With the exception of a comparatively small number of professional criminals the coolies who went to the Transvaal were a harmless, law-abiding body of peasants and artisans, who took this means of earning enough money to enjoy the remainder of their lives in ease in the fatherland.⁶

¹ In all, 4,480 laborers signed contracts at Chifu and 10,628 at Changwantu. (*Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, Johannesburg, 1905-6*, Blue Book [Cd 3338], p. 13).

² Arts. II, IV, VIII, of the Convention; Blue Book (Cd 2246).

³ *Further Correspondence Relating to the Transvaal Labor Question, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1941), p. 39.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1905, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 25.

⁵ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2401), pp. 81 ff.

⁶ *Report of the Foreign Labor Department, Johannesburg, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 11.

Under the terms of the indenture a different class of coolies could not have been expected, even with the most careful supervision. The limitations as to the work required and the restrictions as to promotions prevented the more ambitious from going—except the adventurous and criminally inclined who hoped to evade these restrictions. There were, to be sure, a greater number of criminals among the emigrants than there would have been if the recruiting had been more carefully conducted.¹ These criminals, moreover, did have some influence upon the result of the experiment, but they did not determine the result. For an explanation of the failure of the experiment we shall have to look to other causes than the character of those who took service in the mines. The causes are to be found in the Importation Ordinance and the effect of its limitations upon the work of the Chinese. The difficulties in the ordinance were emphasized, moreover, by the character of those who attempted to operate it.

The administration of the ordinance was in charge of a superintendent, appointed by the lieutenant-governor of the Transvaal. The superintendent appointed his staff of assistants, consisting of inspectors, physicians, and clerks. The work of the staff was of a supervisory nature and its purpose was to see that the provisions of the ordinance were carried out. The staff inspected the mines and compounds, saw that proper sanitation was secured, that a sufficient medical force was arranged for, and that plenty of hospital space was provided. It also heard complaints from Chinese who claimed to have been mistreated, and performed many other supervisory duties.² In other words, its function was to insure the contentment and fair treatment of the laborers and, at the same time, to assist in securing a satisfactory amount of labor from them for their employers.³

The employers, acting under the ordinance limitations and the government supervision, sought to organize the laborers into a band of efficient workmen. The police and control measures in detail were left in their hands, though in many cases there was not a clear understand-

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 26.

² The superintendent of the Foreign Labor Department in his report for 1905-6 said: "The present staff of inspectors consists of ten, of whom six are officers in the army."—*Report for 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 8.

³ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 16.

ing of the dividing line between their powers and duties and those of the government.¹

The Chinese laborers, being limited to the mine premises, as were the natives, required special housing provisions. The compound² method, which had been in use from the beginning with the natives, was continued with the coolies. The compound was situated on the mine premises where the Chinese worked, and there they were housed and fed by the company for which they labored. Each company employed from two thousand to three thousand coolies. These were under the direct control of a mine manager who was in charge of the mine and the compound. For the special administration of the compound a sub-manager was provided. In most cases the managers were further assisted in discipline and control by European Chinese-speaking controllers, who came with the laborers from China, and took service as overseers or controllers of the Chinese in the mines and compounds.³ Likewise each manager had an interpreter. Each mine had its quota divided into twenty or thirty groups of one hundred each; each group was placed in charge of a Chinese overseer, called "headman," "head-boy," or "subheadman."⁴ A number of coolies also were selected for police.⁵ The Chinese and natives were in no case housed together and so far as possible their work in the mines was separated.⁶

¹ *Telegraphic Correspondence Relating to the Transvaal Labor Importation Ordinance, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1898), pp. 9 ff.

² The Chinese compounds were simply barracks arranged with a large dining-hall in the center and surrounded by sleeping-rooms.

³ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2401), p. 82.

⁴ "It is merely for the more efficient control of the laborers, that instead of having a man in charge of 3,000 to 4,000 laborers they were divided into a certain number of gangs or sections and a laborer placed at the head of each group, a laborer whose duty was to report when any offense had been committed by any laborer in his gang. If he failed to report them he was liable on conviction to a penalty."—*Ibid.* (Cd 2786), p. 69.

⁵ *Ibid.* (Cd 2401), p. 82.

⁶ *Ibid.* (Cd 2786), p. 23.

CHAPTER VIII

THE CHINESE AS LABORERS IN THE MINES

From the foregoing it will be seen that the Chinese were restricted to very narrow limits, and yet were expected to prove efficient laborers. The important question for us to consider now is the worth of their labor. This we may view from two standpoints: first, from that of the employer, and second, from that of the state. The employment of the coolies might easily be of profit to the mining stockholders, and not be of economic or social advantage to the whole community and vice versa.

As a laborer the coolie demonstrated his competency.¹ His efficiency was equal to that of the whites and double that of the natives. At the same time wages paid to him were the same as those paid to the native—that is, about \$12.50 per month, in addition to all living expenses, with transportation to and from the mines.² The outlay for the Chinese was somewhat greater than for the native before beginning work in the mines, yet the superior earning ability of the coolie counteracted the influence of this initial cost upon the final result or the value of the Chinese. Although we must keep these minor differences of cost in mind, we cannot arrive at a satisfactory conclusion by the comparative study of such single items of expense as wages, transportation, etc. We have chosen to examine this experiment in Chinese labor from the standpoint of the entrepreneur, and from his position we must consider the whole cost of production, in whatever form there is an outlay of money. If money is saved in wages and lost in other expenses created by the introduction of the coolies, then the experiment cannot be a success, unless the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

With the introduction of the coolies there was a remarkable increase in the output of the mines, as a comparison of the production of the years 1898 and 1905 shows. We give the figures for these years because the mines reached the highest development possible with the use of whites and natives in 1898; and in 1905 the mining industry had recovered from the effects of the war, and was in full operation under Chinese,

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2401), pp. 17-18.

² *Ibid.*, 1904, Blue Book (Cd 2183), p. 1.

natives, and whites, the whites in both cases performing the skilled labor.¹

	1898	1905	Percentage of Increase
Mines of all kinds.....	164	298	63.41
Mine employees.....	100,098	177,812	77.15
Output of minerals.....	\$84,775,000	\$115,720,000	36.63
Accidents reported *.....	787	1,507	91.49
Mining rights held.....	165,800	274,000	65.26
License revenues.....	\$1,410,000	\$1,910,000	35.38
Number of officials.....	170	201	18.24
Salaries.....	\$429,100	\$520,500	24.40†

* The comparison in this instance is affected by the more stringent regulations now enforced as to the definition of accidents which have to be reported.

† Cf. *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony* (Cd 3528), p. 18.

In order to understand the full significance of the development indicated by these figures, we should note a number of facts. The increase in the number of mines worked indicates not only the extension of the industry, but also that the mines of less worth could be worked profitably. Likewise the increase in the number of mining claims shows a similar extension of the industry. We note, however, that the mine taxes do not increase in proportion to the production. This fact is favorable to the mine operators, but unfavorable to the government. We submit (p. 42) a comparison of the efficiency of the Chinese, native, and white labor for the years 1903-5.²

On two points the tables do not give comparative costs in full. The first of these is the initial expense of the two kinds of labor, which was discussed above. The other point of comparison is in living expenses, which cost \$1.75 per month for the native as against \$2.75 for the Chinaman. Some of the comparisons should be carefully noted, as, for instance, the increased number of feet drilled and the increased amount of dirt handled. The greater increase in the amount of work performed, as compared with the output of gold, is very significant,

¹ The Transvaal government must be regarded as virtually a partner in the labor experiment. It was in the interest of the government as well as that of the mines that the Chinese were introduced. The government bore a share in the expense and realized a higher profit through mine taxation, etc.

² This table is made up from data given in Blue Book (Cd 3528), pp. 134-84.

WITWATERSRAND: PRODUCING AND NON-PRODUCING MINES

AVERAGE NUMBER IN SERVICE

	Whites	Natives	Chinese
1903			
Jan.-June	10,697	52,640	.....
July-Dec.	11,704	64,824	.....
1904			
Jan.-June	12,228	70,351	167
July-Dec.	13,823	74,149	11,112
1905			
Jan.-June	15,522	93,489	34,668
July-Dec.	15,925	88,671	47,859
1906			
Jan.-June	15,844	83,756	50,041

SALARIES AND WAGES

1903			
Jan.-June	\$ 8,852,370	\$ 3,066,670	.....
July-Dec.	10,558,155	4,213,186	.....
1904			
Jan.-June	10,535,000	4,551,315	\$ 1,265
July-Dec.	11,916,215	5,495,670	113,855
1905			
Jan.-June	13,333,945	6,161,610	1,585,420
July-Dec.	15,145,615	6,043,255	2,380,000
1906			
Jan.-June	15,581,535	6,225,630	2,765,650

DEVELOPMENT OF THE MINES

	Feet Drilled	Machines in Use	Tons of Earth Handled
1903			
Jan.-June	175,970	1,190	7,439,950
July-Dec.	198,665	1,441	9,439,950
1904			
Jan.-June	199,171	1,578	10,650,028
July-Dec.	210,990	1,722	12,168,080
1905			
Jan.-June	261,724	1,477	17,241,569
July-Dec.	298,978	1,882	10,504,248
1906			
Jan.-June	294,985	2,053	17,611,035

because it indicates that a lower grade of mines was being worked profitably. The following table shows this more clearly:

	WITWATERSRAND		OUTSIDE DISTRICTS		TRANSVAAL	
	Stamps	Value	Stamps	Value	Stamps	Value
1905.....	6,930	\$99,958,340	405	\$4,552,080	7,335	\$104,020,370
1904.....	5,555	77,695,095	280	2,779,950	5,835	80,772,545
Increase..	1,375	\$22,263,245	125	1,772,130	1,500	23,247,825

During the year 1905 the districts outside of the Rand showed increased activity; the number of the companies paying dividends was 16 as against 12 in 1904; the increase in production was 69,408 ounces of gold, and the number of stamps increased 125 over those of the previous year.¹

In this connection it is also necessary to regard the production of the whole of the Transvaal after the introduction of the coolies. The production for the years 1905 and 1906, including all minerals, is:

Year	Gold	Silver	Coal	Diamonds	Chemicals	Stones
1905-6.....	\$110,439,185	\$350,520	\$4,185,880	\$4,931,145	\$161,010	\$1,878,300
1904-5.....	91,805,720	271,105	4,374,080	5,992,650	123,170	1,827,680
Increase *.	18,633,465	79,415	.....	.....	37,840	50,520
Decrease ..	.....	.....	189,200	1,061,505	.....	.....

* The net amount of increase was \$17,552,535.

We have already seen that among the natives the amount of sickness was a serious hindrance to their successful employment. This difficulty was a slight factor among the Chinese. Even the whites, doing only skilled labor, showed a higher death-rate than the Chinese. A comparison of mortality, with cause of death, is given in the following table:²

CAUSE OF DEATH	WHITES			CHINESE			NATIVES		
	No.	Average No. of Laborers	No. of Deaths in 1000	No.	Average No. of Laborers	No. of Deaths in 1000	No.	Average No. of Laborers	No. of Deaths in 1000
Accident, murder, suicide.....	99	19,447	5.1	397	47,545	8.1	629	112,225	5.1
Sickness.....	281	.....	14.5	538	.....	11.1	4,930	.....	35.0
Total.....	380	19,447	19.6	935	47,545	19.2	5,559	112,225	46.1

¹ *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1905*, p. xlviii.

² See *Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1907*, Blue Book (Cd 3528), p. 151.

CHAPTER IX

THE VALUE OF THE COOLIES TO THE TRANSVAAL

The tables in the preceding chapter show a striking development of the mining industries due to the use of Chinese labor. It is evident that the Chinaman is in every way more efficient than the native. It is instructive here to read the opinion of the employers in 1905-6 as to the value of coolie labor, as expressed by the president of the Chamber of Mines, who, in his farewell address, given upon retiring from office in 1905, said, after enumerating the advantages and disadvantages of Chinese labor: "On account of the short experience in the use of the Chinese and the many difficulties arising out of the newness of the situation, it is difficult to compare the work of the Chinese and the natives, but taken as a whole, the efficiency of the Chinese can be pronounced as distinctly satisfactory."¹ One year later, upon a similar occasion, the president of the Chamber said in his address: "When due allowance has been made for the novelty of the work performed by the Chinese in the mines, and when the necessity of giving them time to learn their duties has been considered, the standard of efficiency is very satisfactory. The average coolie is a steady worker."² After an able defense of the use of the coolies in the mines and a statement of the advantages of the plan to the community, he concludes his speech with the following words: "By the figures which I have given you it is shown beyond a doubt that, whatever its disadvantages may be, Chinese labor has contributed greatly to that extension of industry which has taken place during the past two years and which has been the means of giving employment and providing a living for thousands of people, for whom, but for the introduction of the Chinese, there would have been no place on the Rand."³

These statements of the officers of the Chamber can be accepted as correct, so far as the value of the coolie labor to the employers is concerned, but, as regards the advantages of this kind of labor to the community, it cannot be considered final. It was a partisan statement. In fact there was a Rand party and an anti-Rand party in the Transvaal. The Rand party was composed of the employers and those interested directly in the mines; the anti-Rand party consisted of those living in

¹ *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1904*, p. xxx.

² *Ibid.*, 1905, p. xxxi.

³ *Ibid.*, p. lxviii.

the Transvaal and engaged in other occupations than mining. The above statements represent the views of the Rand party, and from their partisan viewpoint they did not regard the interest of the community as a whole. The expression of opinion by members of the anti-Rand party, who believed the Chinese were undesirable residents and who were trying to bring about their return to China, has points of equal strength. Regarding the views of each party for what they are worth, we find some strong and reasonable grounds for opposition to the coolies.

The Chinese, in the first place, while engaged in the Rand mines, were producers; they were not consumers of the products of the country; at least, not to any great degree. In this respect they differed from the natives. The following daily allowance of food, as stated in the contract, shows that the requirements were almost exclusively for imported products:

Rice, not less than	1½ lb.
Fish or meat	½ "
Fresh vegetables	1½ "
Salt	1 oz.
Sugar	½ "
Chinese tea	¼ "

In addition to this bill of fare Chinese condiments in sufficient quantity were required, though other products might be substituted for these if they had equivalent nutritive value.¹ What the coolies actually used is given in the following table of materials imported for Chinese consumption in the years 1905-6:²

	1905		1906	
	Lbs.	Value	Lbs.	Value
Rice	16,388,232	\$ 555,440	18,450,739	\$ 598,285
Meats	5,832,319	402,526	7,038,526	550,195
Fish	103,373	8,105	270,204	20,065
Salt	459,561	5,015	531,114	5,065
Vegetables		244,220		158,400
Tea	80,758	14,170	61,110	11,040
Bread	6,988,046	272,700	8,358,008	332,875
Other foods		36,640		40,575
Medicine		36,880		42,500
Total value		\$1,477,950		\$1,749,050

¹ See *Convention between the United Kingdom and China, etc.*, Blue Book (Cd 2246), p. 7.

² Your committee desires to record its appreciation of the assistance afforded by the merchants in dealing with the difficult question of meeting the requirements of the new branch of trade created to supply the wants of the imported laborers.—*Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1904*, p. xxix.

Articles of clothing and luxuries were also for the most part imported, so that the only profit to the Transvaal from the Chinese as consumers was that realized by the local merchants in the sale of Chinese goods, the value of which was insignificant.

As producers their value may easily be overestimated. A certain amount of the products of their labor went directly to the government in taxes, but we have already noted that this increase was not in proportion to the increase in production. In so far as these laborers increased the national income through the income of individuals, whether capitalists, stockholders, white officials, or laborers, we may consider their productivity profitable. Let us see to what extent there was this increase. The stock in the Transvaal mines is held principally by foreigners, and therefore the greater part of the increase from Chinese labor went to foreign lands.¹ This would, of course, have been true under any increase in production, but we have shown that the coolies do not have the corresponding advantages, for the Transvaal, of other laborers. There was an increase in the number of officials, and of white skilled laborers; many of those out of employment were given work, and the community was so far benefited. It must be noted, however, that this whole discussion of the value of coolie labor applies only to the Transvaal, and does not indicate what these laborers might be worth to other communities, except in so far as the same conditions might be repeated.

There were positive advantages resulting from the employment of the Chinese. The labor scarcity was no longer felt, and the agricultural development of the country proceeded, unhindered by lack of labor. Similarly the demand for laborers for public works was satisfied, and the increase in government funds provided the necessary means for carrying out some of the necessary improvements. Means of transportation were also provided, roads were made, and means for irrigation were carried through. To this extent the Chinese certainly accomplished the purpose for which they were introduced and rendered valuable service to the Transvaal and to the whole of South Africa.

¹ The capital stock in the Witwatersrand mines in the year 1904 was divided between the different nations as follows: England, 45 per cent; France, 30 per cent; Germany, 15 per cent; South Africa, 7½ per cent; Austria, 2½ per cent; see Epstein, *Die Minenindustrie im englischen Südafrika*, p. 109.

CHAPTER X

THE CONTROL OF THE CHINESE

So far we have attempted to show what was the value to the mine and to the community of the coolie laborers, and to what extent they fulfilled the purpose for which they were introduced. We have also, as far as possible, attempted to isolate the labor itself from the difficulties and problems connected with it, and to examine simply the amount of work performed, with its immediate costs and value to all concerned. Such a method cannot, however, profitably be continued farther, because the determination of the worth of the laborers is a complex problem and cannot be separated from maintenance in the broadest sense of the term, maintenance here standing for the whole expense caused by the employment of the Chinese. This includes not only living expenses and wages, but also the outlay for discipline and control: the cost for the detection and punishment of crime, the support of prisons, and so forth.

Insubordination on the part of the coolies was not infrequent and took the form either of opposition to the demands of the employers, or of misdemeanors and crime against the colony. As an example of such opposition to employers may be mentioned the refusal to work, or the refusal to do more than a certain amount of work. This refusal to work was made more effective by the concerted action of the laborers.¹ The coolies made use of the strike, against which the managers were even more powerless than if the laborers had been whites; for the coolies were capable of all the shrewdness of the whites without being subject to the same restraint or the same code of morals. The following quotation shows the method used by the laborers against the managers of the mines: "The trouble at Aurora West occurred when a number of Chinese damaged the compound and then ran away. On October 17, thirty-three coolies refused to work and a white overseer was knocked down."²

In the first six months of the employment of the Chinese there were

¹ Headboys on the North Randfontein mines incited all other laborers on the mines to drill only twelve inches during a shift of ten hours, a hole of thirty-six inches being accepted as an ordinary day's work for unskilled laborers.—Blue Book (Cd 2401), p. 96.

² *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2401), p. 97.

fourteen disturbances of a more or less serious nature. The character of these disturbances is illustrated by the following report:

The disturbance on the North Randfontein mine began by a fight between a Kaffir and a Chinaman. The Kaffir took refuge in the timekeeper's office and the Chinese headmen demanded his surrender in order to inquire into the matter and punish him. This was refused and, after a short discussion, the Chinese headmen ran off to the compound, blew their whistles to call out the aborers, and led them in a Kaffir-hunting expedition. Fortunately the Kaffirs had bare feet, and the Chinese had on miners' boots, so that the Kaffirs were not caught. They (the Chinese) then attacked a Kaffir location and began pulling the huts to pieces, when a small body of police rode up, and after some difficulty marshaled them all back into their compounds.¹

It would be wrong, however, to suppose that strikes and disturbances on the part of the Chinese were the rule in the Transvaal. The amount of work accomplished would have been impossible if the majority of the laborers had not been energetic in the performance of their tasks. A more serious difficulty presented itself in the crimes committed by the Chinese. From the beginning much criminal activity was evident among the coolies. As they became acquainted with the conditions under which they worked, the nature of the crimes changed, but did not become less frequent. The following table gives the crimes for which Chinese were convicted, committed from 1904-6:

Month	Forgery	Possession of Dangerous Weapons	Escaping from Custody	Assault	Public Violence	Murder	Theft and Robbery	Housebreaking	Mines, Works, and Machine Regulations	Possession of Alcohol	Crimes against Municipal Laws	Gambling	Violation of the Ordinance	Encouraging Strikes	Total	Average No. of Laborers
1904																
July-Dec ..	...	..	..	34	..	..	11	...	..	..	..	..	299	140	484	11,112
1905																
Jan.-June ..	6	..	..	133	5	1	34	...	..	..	..	..	1,136	79	1,394	34,688
1905																
July-Dec ..	134	9	8	329	89	6	81	102	12	..	..	12	4,686	4	5,472	47,859
1906																
Jan.-June ..	183	3	4	381	23	29	131	108	54	2	6	30	7,106	...	8,060	50,041

The above table gives the number of convictions but does not show the real number of the crimes, as the Chinese were skilful in concealing their offenses. Their criminal record is much worse than that of the natives. In the fiscal year 1905-6 there were about 49,000 Chinese

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2401), p. 52.

working in the mines with 13,532 convictions, 29.6 per cent of the whole number employed. In the same year there were about 85,000 natives employed and only 3,824 were brought before the courts. This was 203 more than in the previous year, and was not less than the average number. Of the number brought before the court, 1,234 were convicted for desertion, 456 for assault, 480 for thefts, 47 for housebreaking, 7 for rape, 13 for murder, 1,909 for drunkenness, and 1,060 for violation of laws against the use of alcohol.¹

We do not need to follow this comparison farther, as it is only of secondary importance. It indicates, however, the greater expense imposed on the government for the preservation of law and order. Moreover, the cost of the administration of justice was for definite reasons very much greater in the case of the coolies. Very few of the coolies paid their fines; instead, they went to prison at the government's expense.² The number of Chinese convicted in July,

VIOLATIONS OF THE STATUTES*

Month	Possession of Dangerous Weapons	Escaping from Custody	Public Violence	Assault	Murder	Attempted Murder	Forgery	Theft	Housebreaking and Robbery	Mines, Works, and Machinery Regulations	Possession of Liquor	Municipal Laws and Miscellaneous	Violation of the Gaming Laws	Total	Number of Coolies in Service on Last Day of each Month
1905															
July.....	..	..	9	53	..	..	9	26	..	1	..	4	..	102	43,155
August.....	5	2	6	68	..	..	13	13	39	1	..	..	..	147	44,565
September.....	..	..	16	40	..	..	6	11	11	..	..	..	..	94	44,448
October.....	..	4	32	37	..	1	3	4	12	4	..	..	..	97	45,892
November.....	4	..	14	50	..	..	56	8	12	3	..	..	..	143	45,806
December.....	..	2	12	81	4	..	56	22	28	3	..	..	..	208	47,917
1906															
January.....	7	1	1	57	..	..	56	18	10	8	..	..	..	152	47,115
February.....	8	1	..	66	4	..	35	25	9	15	..	3	..	167	49,935
March.....	10	..	16	67	..	..	31	32	9	9	..	..	4	178	49,877
April.....	..	1	16	79	13	6	9	24	56	6	..	..	..	200	49,187
May.....	4	1	..	52	6	..	29	22	21	5	..	6	..	146	50,944
June.....	5	..	..	65	1	..	4	21	11	11	2	3	26	149	52,328
Total.....	43	12	122	715	28	7	307	226	218	66	2	16	30	1,781	.....

* The table for ordinance violations is presented on page 52.

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1907*, Blue Book (Cd 3528), p. 117.

² In October, 1905, the Transvaal Council passed a law deducting fines from the wages of the Chinese, but it was repealed by the English Parliament.—*Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 14.

August, and September, 1905, was 2,401, and only 24 of these paid fines.¹

From the table given on p. 48 we can also see that the offenses increased in number from the beginning. These offenses are of such significance that we shall present them in detail by dividing them into two classes: first, violation of the statutes, and second, violations of the ordinance.²

A closer examination of the offenses in the foregoing tables indicates that the character as well as the number of crimes tended to be more serious as the laborers became acquainted with conditions. The laborers possessed dangerous weapons which they had secured for use in their attacks upon the farmers and the white merchants,³ and in a few cases white farmers were actually murdered by these wandering Chinese.⁴ We present here another table of the convictions and fines for two representative months, indicating more nearly the nature of the offenses:⁵

SEPTEMBER 1905

(44,484 Chinese laborers)

Crime: Housebreaking

2	Sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment
8	" " 6 "
1	" " 1 year's "

Crime: Breach of Peace

16 Sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2563), pp. 5, 10, 17, and (Cd 2786), pp. 5, 21, 40, 47.

² *Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, Johannesburg, 1905-6*, p. 36.

³ In 1905 a law was passed forbidding the use of dangerous weapons, a list of which follows: swords and daggers; knives with cutting edges of eight inches or more in length; spears and loaded or spiked sticks; knuckle-dusters; sandbags; jumpers, crowbars, or hammers exceeding three pounds in weight; axes and pickaxes. These regulations applied only to the Chinese.

⁴ A letter from General Botha to the governor of the Transvaal in May, 1906, reads as follows: "I regret to trouble you again in connection with the Chinese who continue to attack and injure the farmers. The house of Jacob Smith has been attacked again and has been destroyed by dynamite. At the same time two Chinese were shot. Mr. Schulte reports that the last lot of Chinese who were captured in his vicinity had in their possession dynamite, presumably to blow up the houses where farmers defended themselves. It becomes clear that the Chinese, in order to attain their cruel purposes against the farmers, are going to use still more barbarous methods." — *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1906*, p. 101.

⁵ *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal, etc., 1906*, Blue Book (Cd 3528), pp. 1 ff.; and (Cd 2786), pp. 48-49.

Crime: Theft

2	Sentenced to	7 days' imprisonment
1	"	" 14 "
1	"	" 21 "
5	"	" 1 month's "
2	"	" 6 "

Crime: Forgery

6 Sentenced to 3 months' imprisonment

Crime: Assault

1	Sentenced to	2 days' imprisonment
26	"	" 1 month's "
1	"	" 6 weeks' "
1	"	" 2 months' "
4	"	" 3 " "
4	"	" 6 " "

MAY 1906

(50,944 Chinese laborers)

Crime: Housebreaking

26 Sentenced to 7 days to 1 year, and one to 15 lashes additional

Crime: Theft

22	Sentenced from	3 months to 5 years, with 15 lashes and hard labor
7	"	" 7 days " 3 months

Crime: Forgery

29 Sentenced from 7 days to 8 months, with hard labor

Crime: Assault

52 Sentenced from 3 days to 12 months, and 10 to 15 lashes

Crime: Murder

6 Sentenced to death penalty

Crime: Dangerous Weapons

9 Sentenced from 6 weeks to 2 months, with hard labor

During the year the authorities instituted a change. For certain offenses, instead of imprisoning the guilty they flogged them or sentenced them to prison.² This change, however, did not accomplish the desired results, for the laborers remained as stubborn as ever in their efforts to

² The superintendents and inspectors had no jurisdiction to hold preliminary inquiries into serious cases. They were obliged, therefore, to leave all cases, the fitting punishment for which would exceed a fine of \$375.00 or imprisonment for more than six months to the magistrates. . . . In case of a conviction for a second offense lashes, not exceeding twenty-five, could be inflicted.—Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 49.

accomplish certain purposes for which they were striving. We have shown that the crimes committed by the coolies were a hindrance to their usefulness, yet we should not exaggerate the seriousness of the crimes themselves. The Chinese are, on the whole, a rather peaceable people and many of them remained so in the Transvaal. But the continual gambling in the compounds involved them in debt, and they had to find money for payment. Accordingly they engaged in robbery as the easiest method of securing the necessary funds.¹

One important effect of the offenses of the coolies was that they intensified the antagonistic attitude among the citizens. Of the 13,532 convictions in 1905-6, 11,785 were for the violation of the ordinance, as follows:²

VIOLATIONS AGAINST THE ORDINANCE

	1*	2†	3‡	4¶	5§	6||	7**	8††	Number of Laborers
1905									
July.....	351	218	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	43,155
August.....	378	452	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	44,565
September.....	434	365	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	.....	44,484
October.....	385	417	.....	41	.....	.....	.....	.....	45,892
November.....	501	205	.....	28	.....	.....	.....	.....	45,806
December.....	565	71	102	39	25	18	.....	.....	47,217
1906									
January.....	809	101	441	70	8	25	.....	.....	47,117
February.....	787	61	310	28	7	17	2	.....	49,955
March.....	724	63	382	83	12	14	.....	.....	49,897
April.....	569	21	231	72	15	7	.....	.....	49,789
May.....	890	10	267	74	96	10	.....	1	50,944
June.....	605	33	165	54	11	4	5	1	52,328

* Desertions, refusal to work, unlawful absence from work.

† Absence from mine premises without permit.

‡ Failing to present permit if requested, when absent from the premises.

¶ Possession of opium.

§ Practicing fraud in the performance of work and injuring property or using insulting language.

|| Absence from roll call on Sunday.

** Interest in trade or business.

†† Aiding other laborers in violation of ordinances.

¹ The coolie that cannot pay his debts has collective pressure brought to bear upon him, and he is oppressed in the compounds to such an extent that life becomes a burden to him. When in this position, two alternatives present themselves to him as a means of escape: first, to desert for the purpose of robbery in order to get the funds to liquidate the indebtedness; second, to commit suicide or to commit murder and go to prison.—*Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1906*, p. 552.

² *Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 36.

Violations of the ordinance may be classed under three main heads, as follows: first, desertions, or leaving the mines without the intention of returning; second, absence from the mines without a permit; third, refusal to show permit when found absent from the mines. The second class of absences was made up largely of men who had deserted, either the regular desertions, such as those mentioned in the first class, or of those who had simply escaped from the premises with the hope of returning before the absence was detected. Such escapes were for the purpose of securing opium, or obtaining weapons, or for the purpose of punishing those who had taken advantage of them in former dealings in these articles.¹

It will not be without interest here to look into the efforts to prevent these escapes. In the first year it became clear that the regular courts could not handle all violations. These courts were located at some distance from the mines, and the inconveniences caused by the trials were too great to be endured and involved too much expense to be continued. When we consider the number of convictions, and remember at the same time that many laborers tried were not convicted and that cases had to be tried in a magistrate's court more than three miles distant from the mines, we can realize the extent of the hindrance to their work. But, in addition, witnesses for and against the accused had to be summoned, and officers had to be retained to serve summonses and force witnesses to appear—not an easy matter with the Chinese. In fact, all the complicated machinery of a magistrate's court had to be operated, and then perhaps, because of the crowded condition of the courts, the cases were postponed or remanded for trial to an official in another district. With such complications it was impossible to deal with all violations in the regular courts. Therefore, provision was made for special courts in which the legal process might be hastened. Superintendents' and inspectors' courts were established in which the trial might take place as informally as possible at the mines.² The following offenses against the ordinance were tried in these courts:³ refusal to be

¹ Many white merchants looked upon the coolie as a person from whom they could make unfair exactions. The Chinamen were too shrewd for this and trouble often resulted (*Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, Johannesburg, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), pp. 11 ff.).

² *Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), pp. 5 ff.

³ *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 38.

repatriated; assistance to other laborers in the violation of the ordinance; opposition to officials; assistance to deserting Chinese; escape from service; refusal to work when required; unlawful absence from work; performance of other than unskilled labor; acceptance of work with a manager other than the one importing coolies; any interest in commerce or trade; false complaint against officials; and the possession of opium, gum, or gum extract. Since the Chinese had been accustomed to receive corporal punishment in China, the employers argued that this right, conferred upon the managers and controllers, would induce the coolies to perform the proper amount of work without the necessity of losing time in trial and court proceedings. The managers therefore allowed its use in the mines and compounds. After three months' trial in the closing months of 1905 with no improvement the government forced the managers to put an end to corporal punishment.¹ When these measures failed—early in the year—the governor of the Transvaal, Lord Selbourne, selected a new superintendent for the administration of the ordinance, in the hope of attaining the desired end. Two months after the change the governor in his report says: "The Superintendent of the Foreign Labor Department, Mr. Jameson, who is thoroughly acquainted with the habits and idiosyncracies of the northern Chinese, has only been here for a period of two months, in which time he has had to make himself acquainted with the conditions of the country and to organize the department. He assures me that he is very confident that within a short time, when he has a full staff at his disposal, he will be able to get control of laborers in the mines. He has received every assurance that whatever staff is necessary for him to exercise proper control over the laborers he shall have."² In spite of this change in management and the efforts put forth, the violations, especially escapes from the mines, continued, and necessitated other means of control.

These new measures of control included additional number of police guards. From the beginning of the introduction of the coolies the number of police outside of the mines was increased as a precaution against desertion from the mines; but, like other measures, this increase proved wholly inadequate. To secure against the possibility of future desertions a special ordinance was passed by the Transvaal council creating a farmer-citizens' police system, under which any farmer could arrest a Chinese laborer found outside of the mine premises. Offices were

¹ *Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 4.

² *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 16.

established in the country, and the police were stationed there for the reception of the coolies captured and delivered by the farmers.¹ This measure likewise failed to prevent desertions, and in 1906 the South African constabulary was called into service, with the result described by one writer as follows: "Arising out of the condition which has been created by the desertion of the Chinese laborers from the mines, and the consequent outrages upon the country-side, a military force of four hundred men of the South African constabulary has been called into service to arrest deserters and prevent predatory parties."² This military force formed a ring about the mines which prevented desertions far into the country, as had occurred before, but did not prevent crimes near the mines. The farmers had been provided with arms by the government for protection against deserting Chinese, but with all the precautions the menace continued to such an extent that the government appointed a special commission to investigate means of preventing crimes. This committee reported: "The opinion has been generally expressed—and it is the opinion in which we concur—that even if the strength of the present force were doubled it would not be effective in checking the desertions and consequent excursions into the country-side and outrages by the laborers."³

Because of the conduct of the coolies it is not surprising that the government should arrange for the repatriation of the laborers at the expiration of their indenture. The governor in his speech at the opening of Parliament on March 31, 1906, stated: "My ministers are resolved that the employment of the Chinese laborers on the mines of the Witwatersrand shall cease at the earliest possible moment."⁴ He added, however, that if they were convinced that repatriation at the end of the first period of the laborer's service would leave the mines without laborers, they would be prepared to recommend to Parliament such measures as would make possible a temporary renewal of indentures. On June 14, 1906, after two years' experience with Chinese labor, the governor of the Transvaal announced to Parliament that he and his ministers would not interfere with the return of the coolies upon the

¹ The following prices were paid to farmers for capturing and delivering the deserters: 25 cents for one or two Chinamen for each mile traveled; 45 cents for three; 50 cents for four or five; 65 cents for six or seven; and 75 cents for eight. (*Annual Report of Foreign Labor Department, Johannesburg, 1905-6*, p. 43).

² *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1906*, p. 547.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 1908, Introduction.

termination of the first contract. He gave two reasons for this action: "the unalterable conviction that the system of Chinese labor is in the highest degree inimical to the abiding interests of the Transvaal, and the consideration that the supply of native labor is, and has been, for some time in marked excess of the demand."¹

The abundant supply of laborers at that time was due to two causes: first, there were actually present more than 50,000 Chinese laborers; and second, the unfavorable condition of the crops and the resulting stagnation of public improvements made it necessary for the native himself to seek employment in the mines and on the farms. Our conclusion nevertheless that the industrial and agricultural demands of South Africa cannot be permanently supplied from the native sources is not changed by such temporary conditions. The employers, as we have seen, must find other laborers than the natives for the performance of labor in the Transvaal if stagnation in industry is to be prevented permanently.² This was generally recognized, and the repatriation occurred, not because there were hopes of furnishing the future supply from native sources, but because of the belief, resulting from two years' experience in the use of the coolies, that "Chinese labor is inimical to the best interests of South Africa."

¹ *Annual Report of the Chamber of Mines, 1908*, pp. 8-9.

² In 1909, in spite of the greatly increased number of a better quality of machines, and in spite of the fact that there were 8,000 Chinese still on hand, there was a cry of labor scarcity. The imperial government, in answer to this demand, temporarily opened central Africa for recruiting.

CHAPTER XI

REASONS FOR THE REPATRIATION OF THE CHINESE

The causes of the failure of the experiment deserve a closer examination. In the first place the government and the Chamber of Mines did not comprehend the vastness of the undertaking that they had entered upon. Thus they had not made the proper preliminary preparations for the reception of the Chinese and for introducing them to their work. It is not difficult to understand why they failed in this respect. The Chamber of Mines, representing the mining interests, had waged a long contest and had overcome many difficulties before securing the privilege of introducing the Chinese. When permission was once granted, the coolies were shipped at the earliest possible moment in the hope that the opposition would cease when the laborers were once at their work. In their anxiety to get the laborers, the employers neglected precautions in preparation, a mistake they would hardly have made if they had recognized the seriousness of the problem of control. A simple illustration of this lack of preparation is the fact that the quarters for the coolies were not ready when they arrived in South Africa.

A second serious mistake was made at the outset in the selection of a superintendent. On former occasions when Chinese laborers had emigrated, they had gone from South China, in the provinces of Kuantang and Fukien.¹ In this particular case, Mr. H. R. Skinner, who had been sent to investigate the possibilities of a labor supply from China, reported that "it is from South China that the labor will have to be obtained in the first instance, especially if it is wanted on short notice."² The governor, expecting the laborers to come from South China, selected a superintendent who was acquainted with the South Chinese. The superintendent, in turn, surrounded himself with a staff of officers whose experience was also limited to this class of coolies. The laborers, however, with the exception of 900 Cantonese, came from North China. The field in North China had been opened up through the Russo-Japanese War, and it was found that there was an enormous labor supply in this part of China. North China had for many years furnished the agricul-

¹ *Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 3.

² *Further Correspondence Relating to the Affairs of the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 83.

tural laborers for Manchuria. The Chinese themselves preferred to work in Manchuria, but since this field was closed, they were willing to accept work elsewhere. The North Chinese have been described by one well acquainted with them as follows: "The northern man is of an altogether larger and heavier build than the southern; but he is duller of intellect. He appeared to me to be stronger constitutionally."¹ Further, the Chinese of the northern section differ from those of the south in speech and in customs. On this account the officials, being familiar with the southern Chinese only, could not perform their work of inspection and supervision satisfactorily.² Communication between government officers and Chinese was impossible, except through mine overseers, who, being themselves frequently the object of the laborer's complaint, would not report the grievances. The laborer, unable to secure assistance, fair treatment, and sympathy, became at the very beginning of his work in the mines prejudiced and discontented.³ When the seeds of discontent were once sown it was difficult to eradicate the dissatisfaction among the coolies, especially since there were new problems of control which continually engaged the attention of the officials as they arose for solution.⁴

It must, moreover, be recognized that the management of the Chinese presented other serious difficulties—difficulties that did not arise in the case of white or native laborers. For instance, in case the white laborers,

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony*, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 79.

² The significance of having well-qualified government officials is recognized by Lord Selbourne when he said: "No proficiency, however, on the part of the officials belonging to the mine management will obviate the necessity of the government being provided with a staff of inspectors under the superintendent of foreign labor, who are thoroughly conversant with the Chinese language. What is to be borne in mind is that apart from the character of the Chinese themselves, the whole question is one of management."—*Ibid.* (Cd 2786), pp. 26-27.

³ The difference between the character of the Chinaman and the European must not be left out of account here. One important difference which must be considered is emphasized in the following quotation: "We make righteousness the standard; the Chinese, humanity. We ask, 'Is it right?' The Chinese, 'Is it kindly?' With us a man insists upon his rights and looks upon any infringement of them as wrong; in China a man considers his circumstances and what is to be expected in the case. There is no harm in helping yourself to a little of what a rich man owns; but to steal from a poor man is considered a great outrage."—Graves, *Forty Years in China*, p. 68. The employers of the Chinese never recognized this difference.

⁴ *Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), pp. 3-4.

alone or in a body, were insubordinate, they were discharged and that ended the matter. The whites had the right to form unions and to strike, a right they freely used; but public sentiment required of them at least fair reasons for striking, and the conduct of the whites was determined in some degree at least by public sentiment. The whites, moreover, could look forward to promotion if their work merited it. Thus they had a strong incentive to good conduct. These conditions, however, did not apply to the coolie. For him there was no possibility of promotion, whatever his abilities might be, and therefore no special inducement to earnest effort. What is still more significant is the fact that no coolie could be immediately discharged. There were two possible places for the coolie in the Transvaal: the mine and the prison.

The indenture gave the laborer the right to work three years, and nothing but a conviction in court could absolve the employer from carrying out this contract. If the laborer sat down and refused to work, as he often did, it was necessary for the manager to accuse him of refusing to work, have him arrested, tried, and convicted. Then the coolie might refuse to pay his fine, choosing rather to serve out the sentence imposed. This deprived the employer of his labor besides leaving him without compensation for the expense of importation.¹ If, after the coolie served his sentence, he worked out the time lost while in prison, the manager still had the inconvenience of the trial with no compensation for it. It can readily be seen that the manager was at the mercy of the coolie. The quick-witted Chinaman soon discovered the predicament of his employer. In this situation the managers thought it inadvisable to report minor offenses or cases of insubordination to the superintendents and inspectors. The plan they adopted was to force recalcitrant coolies by means of physical violence to do their work.²

The government officials, desiring an impartial administration of the ordinance, met this conduct on the part of the managers by encouraging the laborers to make complaint directly to inspectors in case of mistreatment. This method on the part of the government officials angered the managers, who insisted that such action was subversive of good discipline in the mines, and that the laborers should make complaint to the mine officials first. Recognizing the impossibility of the laborers securing fair treatment from irresponsible overseers, the government authorities placed boxes in the mines and compounds in which written

¹ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 27.

² *Ibid.*, p. 30.

complaints could be placed by the Chinese. Some of these boxes were regularly emptied before the inspectors made their rounds, others were entirely destroyed, and still others were so guarded that the coolies were intimidated from putting in complaints.¹ Closer supervision became necessary on the part of the government, and this was obstructed on the part of mine officials. Some Chinese criminals were suspected of having taken shelter in the mines, and when managers were requested to assist in capturing them, they remarked: "Having taken so much pains upon yourselves, why not assume entire charge?"² The managers thus refused all co-operation with the government.

This lack of harmony between the state and mine officials became evident to the laborers, who were shrewd enough to use the conflict to their own advantage. As has already been pointed out, the managers had to use some of the Chinese as overseers, since enough whites who spoke the Chinese language could not be found. Many of these Chinese overseers took part in destroying inspectors' boxes and in committing other violations of the ordinance for the benefit of the mine and compound managers. In a word, the coolies were to a certain extent trained in the violation of the law. The foregoing discussion shows how proficient they became in the art of crime.

This conduct on the part of the managers was not such as to inspire the coolie either with the spirit of obedience to the laws of the country or with respect for authority in general. It was totally different from the kind of conduct the Chinaman had assumed as characteristic of the whites. The Chinaman had received his impression of the whites from the missionary in China, the merchant, and the official, and had therefore, on the whole, a favorable impression. He had at least found him to be honest and straightforward in his dealings. In the Transvaal, the whites with whom the coolie came into contact, both in and out of the mines, engaged in familiarities with him, played practical jokes, and frequently cheated him, in addition to using him as a tool in the violation of the law. These characteristics displayed by certain of the whites weakened the coolie's respect for all the whites and caused him to refuse obedience to them.³

The coolie observed also the vulnerable points of the white compound managers and took advantage of these. He brought opium and alcohol into the mines and compounds, and spent much of his leisure time in gambling. When he was detected in this conduct he bribed the managers

¹ *Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 9.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.* p. 13.

and the Chinese-speaking controllers, who allowed him to continue this violation of the ordinance. Some of the more enterprising coolies even engaged with profit in an illicit trade in opium. When such conduct was once commenced with the tacit consent of the managers, the difficulty of checking it became a giant task. Chinese headboys and police working in collusion with the controllers and managers, committed excesses for which they were never called to account. The government officials who could not speak the language were wholly unable to cope with the situation.

We shall return later to a discussion of the effect of this kind of life in the compounds upon the conduct of the coolies. At present we wish to notice a more fundamental cause of the difficulties arising out of the control measures. The supreme difficulty, and one that could never be overcome with such a mass of coolies, was that of adjusting them to the new laws and institutions by which they were governed. The Chinese had grown to manhood, and many of these coolies in South Africa to middle age, under completely different ideals and laws.

The Asiatic is fundamentally different from the European in his character and ways of thinking. Moreover, the Chinese are at the extreme limit of this differentiation, and their inability to understand European ways and laws must be taken as a matter of course. The Chinaman at home is governed by edicts and proclamations. He is fully aware of what he can and cannot do. He knows the laws and the punishments for their violations. He accepts his punishment as just if he has committed the offense for which he is convicted. Out of such an environment about 55,000 coolies were transplanted within a year to a country whose laws and institutions were the product of a different civilization. In this country, instead of an edict which he understood, the coolie had to obey laws of which he had no knowledge, and, contrary to all his ideas, ignorance did not save him from prosecution.

The complete change bewildered the coolie, and in the attempt to make him adjust himself to these conditions many serious difficulties arose. The first obstacle was that of finding interpreters for the Chinese language, and this led to many others. The dialects in the different parts of China are so very diverse that the inhabitants of one part cannot understand those of another. The person who understands thoroughly the dialect of North China may not comprehend that of South China.¹ He may even know well the dialect of one district in North China and

¹ *Annual Report of the Transvaal Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 7.

not be able to understand that of another. As the Chinese could not speak English there was no way to communicate with them except through interpreters. There are in general five classes who can interpret for the Chinese and the English. These are missionaries, men in the government service in China, army officers, merchants in China, and coolies who have learned English from traders in Hong Kong. Of these five classes two were available, namely, army officers and the English-speaking coolies. These two classes were the most deficient of all as interpreters. The army officers knew little of the spoken language and the coolies could speak only a little of the trade language. With these two classes as interpreters, exact communication with the laborers was, to a great extent, impossible.¹

The court practice complicated the difficulty of the situation. The coolie was brought for trial into a strange courtroom. He was surrounded by unfamiliar and unsympathetic faces; he could not communicate his thoughts to the jury or judge. The questioning and cross-questioning, often through incompetent and unreliable interpreters, bewildered him, so that a defense was impossible. Moreover, the authorities showed their complete misunderstanding of the Chinaman in believing that he would respect the oath of the English court, which as a matter of fact meant nothing to him. The coolies, therefore, soon learned to combine and give testimony to convict an innocent person who was interfering with their purposes in any way. On the other hand they gave testimony as freely to secure the acquittal of a guilty person whom they needed to carry out their plans.² The courts, as we have seen, were so crowded that it was necessary to use all possible dispatch. This combination of circumstances made it impossible in many cases to find the guilty person, and the effect of this state of affairs, in which honest coolies were the victims of the others who remained unpunished, upon the coolie was to cause extreme dissatisfaction and distrust; while to the criminal it was an incentive for him to continue his vicious practices. The superintendent in his report for 1905-6 made the following statement upon this point:

It is of course to be regretted that the prosecution cannot adduce conclusive evidence adequate to secure a conviction, and the extreme care exercised by the judiciary to prevent the miscarrying of justice is deserving of the highest respect; but nothing can eradicate from the mind of the average

¹ *Annual Report of the Transvaal Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 7.

² *Ibid.*, p. 5.

coolie the feeling that something is wrong somewhere, or from the mind of the accused the belief that the law can be hoodwinked.¹

The delays in the courts, the conviction of the innocent, the freeing of the guilty, imprisonment instead of the summary corporal punishment to which the coolie had been accustomed, and most of all the possibility of escaping punishment entirely, all encouraged crime.

The inspectors' courts that were established had one advantage over the regular tribunals: legal forms were reduced to a minimum and the inspectors *in loco parentis* attempted to find out and punish the real offenders. Under honest, efficient, earnest, and sympathetic persons who understood the coolies these courts would doubtless have relieved many difficulties. But unfortunately so many abuses grew up in them as a result of incompetent and unsympathetic administration that their continuance became an impossibility.²

Dissatisfaction with the administration of justice had something to do with the frequency of desertions. The chief cause of the desertions, however, is to be found in the conditions of living in the compounds. The crowding together of three thousand coolies in barracks offered an opportunity for gambling, and this in turn led to desertions and crime in the country, as has been shown above. Lord Selbourne in speaking of the desertions says: "Worse still is the man who has gambled away all his wages in advance in the mine compounds. He has no further inducement to work; everything he earns goes to those to whom he has lost money, so he deserts in desperation."³ The committee appointed by the governor to inquire into the causes of desertion reports as follows: "Much of the leakage from the mines into the surrounding country with the invariable sequel of outrages and robbery was due to the fact that the laborers had incurred heavy gambling debts in the mines and were subject to undue pressure from their creditors."⁴ In their leisure hours in the compounds—and they had much more leisure than they had ever been accustomed to—they had a chance to plan opposition and insubordination. This they did effectively through the organizations which prevailed among them. How far the desertions themselves were due to premeditated plans cannot be stated definitely; however, from the uniform action observed in other respects, and from the great number of

¹ *Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 5.

² *Ibid.*, p. 7.

³ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁴ *Further Correspondence Relating to Labor in the Transvaal Mines, 1905*, Blue Book (Cd 2786), p. 40.

desertions, we are justified in concluding that they were to a considerable extent planned and carried out by the unions.¹

But not only were the Chinese confined to the mine premises; they were restricted to the performance of unskilled labor in the mines. This was a cause of even more serious trouble. They soon recognized their worth as laborers and objected to being placed in a position where they could not sell their labor without restrictions for the highest possible price, or where they might engage in independent undertakings. The Chinaman has worked for many years in the Malay Peninsula under indenture and his work has been satisfactory. This is because he has, in the first place, the prospect of engaging independently in trade on the termination of his contract; in the second place, the possibility of acquiring property, real and personal; and in the third place, a chance for speculation, for which much will be borne by the average Chinaman.² The fact that the Chinaman makes a satisfactory laborer under these conditions strengthens our contention that it is only when unhampered by restriction that he will work well—that is, when he is free to select both work and employer.

Under the ordinance the laborer could secure a pass and be absent from the mines for forty-eight hours. These excursions into the town and surrounding country showed him opportunities of bettering his condition. In June, 1906, five Chinese were convicted for carrying on independent enterprises. This is not a formidable list, but when we remember the strictness with which the Chinese were guarded, this number in one month is not without significance. It is evident that the Chinaman, knowing he could not engage in independent enterprises, hoped to force his employers to give him better terms under which he might work. There are many evidences in favor of the conclusion that the coolie wished to force better terms from his employer. First, the indenture granted the coolie the right to perform piecework whereby he might

¹ The secret societies among the Chinese have been quite comprehensive in their activities in all the lands where the Chinese have entered. In San Francisco there are six companies or guilds and to one or other of these the great majority of the Chinese belong and contribute. They transact business for the members, supervise labor contracts, receive deposits of money, or remit same to China, and generally take a lively interest in the welfare of the Chinese community. One writer says: "In many ways they [the unions] might be beneficial and useful, but their power might also become a danger, especially if they could suppose you were entirely dependent upon them for unskilled labor."—*Further Correspondence Relating to Affairs in the Transvaal and the Orange River Colony, 1904*, Blue Book (Cd 1895), p. 79.

² *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

increase his wage. Although this is usually a favorite method with the coolie, he did not take advantage of it here. Second, the laborers refused to work after drilling a definite amount. They acted together and set upon and beat those who dared to drill more than the prescribed amount. Third, all laborers were informed that they would be given free passage to their homes in China by the Transvaal government if they desired to return. Although practically none of the laborers accepted the offer of return passage, they nevertheless continued to cause difficulties. Fourth, some of the laborers, escaping, engaged in independent enterprises. Fifth, many of the strikes and disturbances cannot be explained on any other ground.

The effort of the coolies to force better terms from the mine operators showed the completeness with which the laborers grasped their advantageous position. They perceived the unworkable character of the ordinance under which they were employed. Working under it they soon saw that they could make their labor unprofitable to the employers. They knew also that in case a new contract was drawn they would be in a much better place to demand terms that would be satisfactory to themselves than they had been in the first instance. The knowledge that the Chinese had of their superior position with reference to their employers, and the inability of the employers to find a scheme under the ordinance whereby they could force the laborers to fulfil their contracts lie at the very bottom of the failure of the experiment with Chinese labor in the Transvaal.

Summing up all the causes of the failure of the experiment with the Chinese we find that they are as follows: first, the lack of the preparation on the part of the government and mine employers for so great an undertaking; second, the impossibility of the coolies adapting themselves to the requirements of the government; and third, the impossibility of controlling the laborers under the limitations imposed by the labor-importation ordinance.

In studying the whole question we must keep in mind the peculiar conditions of the country. The Transvaal, with its native race and Indian problems for solution, with its enormous native population, its backward industries—except mining—and its undeveloped institutions, did not attract a population which placed public before private interests. In fact, the majority of people were there because the country offered exceptional advantages for the acquisition of wealth. A rough spirit of speculation and "get-rich-quick" prevailed. The country's development under such conditions had created to an exceptional degree the

desire for freedom from governmental restraint. The Rand party had complained bitterly of the old Krueger régime and at the close of the war the Rand party was supreme. It is no wonder that after the war and readjustment the same men who had resisted the old régime should find the restrictions of the new government arduous, except in so far as they contributed to their own immediate interest. This could not better be shown than in the conflict between the mine managers and the governmental officials, of which we have already spoken.

We need not discuss here at length the position of the white laborers in the Transvaal. We have already shown that they bitterly opposed the introduction of the Chinese in the first instance, because they feared their competition. They wished also to retain a monopoly of the skilled labor and did not wish other laborers to enter that might ultimately transplant them. They were unable by their opposition to prevent the introduction of the Chinese, but they were not prevented from using all possible effort to make the experiment unsuccessful. In the complex situations that developed many opportunities presented themselves for effective opposition, and the white laborers let none of these opportunities pass.

In addition to this opposition of the white laborers, the inefficiency of the administrative force of the mines was the cause of many difficulties; but it was not possible to get a better class of men to serve as managers. The work of the mines was uncertain and dangerous. It offered a great deal of risk and, therefore, attracted in the main only persons who had everything to gain and nothing to lose: persons who had immigrated to try their fortunes and who were not particularly influenced by humanitarianism, sympathy, or a feeling of responsibility. They were men who for the most part had come from the lower and middle classes of Europe, especially England. Many of them were retired soldiers, who had no experience in administration of any kind.

If experienced managers could have been secured in sufficient numbers there is no doubt that many of the difficulties could have been avoided. But it was impossible to get reliable experts: first, the number of persons familiar with the mining business and also having a knowledge of the Chinese language and character is very limited; second, the cost of bringing in such experts, even if they could have been found, would greatly have increased working expenses; third, the local public had to be considered. To have proposed to bring the whole administrative force from other countries would have aroused a great deal of hostility. The employers took under consideration a plan of sending young men

to China to prepare for this work, but the uncertainty of the continuance of coolie labor made this plan inadvisable.¹ Whether this would have been feasible under a long tenure of service we need not discuss here. To have brought the personnel of control from the outside instead of using the unemployed whites already there would have defeated one of the purposes of the introduction of the coolies.

Even under the management of trained experts it is doubtful whether the coolies would have adapted themselves to the Transvaal system of government. It is true that the Chinese have adjusted themselves to other governments, but in such cases the number entering the country has been small and the increase gradual, and the laborer has therefore been free to pursue his own course.

¹ *Annual Report of the Foreign Labor Department, 1905-6*, Blue Book (Cd 3338), p. 10.

CHAPTER XII

CONCLUSION

The experiment with Chinese labor in South Africa was a failure, the laborers were returned, and the whole matter was permanently closed. The serious difficulty, as we have seen, was one of control, due on the one hand to local conditions, and on the other to the fact that certain restrictions were placed upon the coolie to which he would not submit. Now, what is the future of the coolie? Is he to take an important place, as an immigrant laborer, in the civilized nations? In the changing conditions, in the technical advancement of industry, in the new economic requirements, we cannot predict what the future will offer or demand. We can, however, state with assurance what can be expected of this class of laborers as conditions now exist.

The story of the Chinese in South Africa has brought out some of the characteristics already familiar to those who knew the coolies in California and Australasia; but it has indicated also qualities not before attributed to them. One writer, speaking of their nature as displayed in California, says:

The Chinese coolie is the ideal industrial machine, the perfect human ox. He will transform less food into more work, with less administrative friction, than any other creature. Even now, when the scarcity of Chinese labor and the consequent rise in wages have eliminated the question of cheapness, the Chinese still have the advantage over all servile labor in convenience and efficiency. They are patient, docile, industrious, and above all "honest" in the business sense that they keep their contracts. Also they cost nothing but money. Any other sort of labor costs human effort and worry, in addition to money. But Chinese labor, like any other commodity, can be bought for so much per dozen or hundred. The Chinese contractor delivers the agreed number of men at the stated time and place, for the agreed price, and if one should drop out he finds another in his stead. The men board and lodge themselves, and when the work is done they disappear from the employer's ken until again needed. The entire transaction consists in paying the contractor an agreed number of dollars for a stated result. The elimination of the human element reduces the labor problem to something the employer can understand. The Chinese labor-machine from this standpoint is perfect.¹

The conduct of the Chinese described here is very different from that

¹ *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, XXXIV, No. 2, 4.

of the coolie we have studied in South Africa. In fact the uncertainty of the coolie was one of the reasons why his labor proved unprofitable in the Transvaal. Doubtless the conditions under which he worked, as we have described them, had much to do with his change in bearing and attitude. In regard to the perseverance which he usually displayed in California another writer says: "His untiring industry and perseverance made him successful in the placer mines, the Chinaman often working over places abandoned by the white miner."¹

In one respect the result of the experiment in South Africa was the same as in other countries: the impossibility of assimilation in the case of the Chinese was fully demonstrated in the fact of his total inability to comprehend the institutions of the country. This characteristic of the Chinaman as shown elsewhere is told in the following quotation from a well-known author:

We have to do with a race which in tenacious adherence to its culture seems equal to our own. The question of receiving them, therefore, assumes an entirely different form from that of receiving immigrants from Europe. The latter blend with the native stock and all become one people. The Chinese remain isolated, and constitute an alien element in the midst of us. There are but two solutions to such a problem as their coming presents. If they are less in numbers than we, they remain an inferior class, doing the drudgery but enjoying none of the rights and performing none of the duties of citizenship. Such a solution is abhorrent to the principles of democracy and incompatible with the maintenance of our institutions. The other solution is that they shall come in such numbers as to overwhelm our civilization, or at least to give rise to continual race conflicts in certain parts of the continent. The interests of civilization forbid the opening of even the possibility of such a conflict.²

This statement seems to me to be a fair presentation of the question; upon its truth the students of the problem are practically agreed. It holds good not only of America but of all countries where European civilization dominates. The conclusion of the experiment in the Transvaal emphasizes anew the correctness of this judgment.

¹ Mayo Smith, *Emigration and Immigration*, p. 138.

² Mayo Smith, *op. cit.*, pp. 247-48.

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